

Education For Our People

**A Policy Frame for the
Development of Education
(1978-87)**

**FOREWORD BY
JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN**

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY

EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE

**A Policy Frame for the Development of
Education Over the Next
Ten Years (1978-87)**

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Foreword

I am very grateful to Justice V.M. Tarkunde and his colleagues for preparing this valuable document on EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE and presenting it to the nation for deliberation and action.

I have always had a deep faith in the capacity of education to bring about individual growth and social transformation. Unfortunately, the formal system of education which we have created for ourselves does not serve either of these purposes. On the one hand, it gives wrong education to the upper and middle classes who are its principal beneficiaries. It makes them aliens to their own culture through the adoption of the values and life-styles of a consumption-oriented industrial society. It also converts them into a parasitic class which perpetuates and even intensifies the poverty of the masses. On the other hand, the common people, who mostly remain outside the school system in spite of its huge size and enormous cost, continue to be deprived, not only of education, but also of many other good things of life. The system has thus failed to promote individual growth. It also becomes more of a hinderance than a help to bring about an egalitarian transformation.

This document tries to indicate what a good national system of education for our country should be, and how it can be created over the next ten years or so. It highlights the need to change the class-orientation of the existing system, and to reorganize it with the education of the people as its central objective. This necessarily implies a massive programme of adult education which will enable the common people to know and assert themselves and involve them in meaningful and challenging programmes for improving the quality of their life. It will also imply the early fulfilment of the constitutional directive to provide good elementary education to all children. It will further imply a substantial increase in the access of the common people to secondary and higher education, the adoption of Indian languages as media of instruction at all stages and an intensive programme for the discovery and development of talent which will look upon all gifted children as wards of the state and assist them to

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realize their full potential. Needless to say, these measures will necessarily imply a corresponding reduction of the privileges and advantages which the upper and middle classes now enjoy within the education system. In short, this document clearly brings out *what we shall have to do* to provide good education to all our people and to create a social milieu where every individual can have the widest possible opportunity for life-long learning.

What is even more important, this document suggests a seven-point programme to bring about this transformation.

(1) As education can only be planned in terms of a broader social context, it highlights the need for transforming the existing inequitable social and wage structures and pursue a programme of simultaneous and complementary social and educational reforms.

(2) It stresses the equally urgent need to transform the existing educational structure, to shift the emphasis from teaching to learning, to stress the incidental and non-formal channels of education, to involve the entire community in the educational process rather than depend exclusively upon the professional teachers, and to make the system decentralized, diversified, elastic, and dynamic.

(3) It emphasizes the need for starting this movement for radical reform simultaneously within and without the educational system as a collaborative effort between educational and socio-political workers.

(4) It accords high priority to changing the ethos of the entire system so that hard and dedicated work to pursue knowledge, excellence, and social transformation becomes a way of life within the system.

(5) It underlines the need for making certain hard political and academic decisions to make the system purposeful and effective.

(6) It emphasizes the primacy of work among the people at the gross-roots level.

(7) It underscores the significance of a mass movement on the basis of solving the day-to-day problems in the lives of the common people and to help them come into their own. It is only such a movement that will generate the needed socio-economic forces and enable the country to provide good education to the people; and the educational effort itself will strengthen the programmes of mass mobilization for improving the quality of life in society.

I heartily commend these proposals to the people. Their success will

obviously depend upon the close collaboration between the educational, social, and political workers. It will depend even more upon the number and quality of individuals who are committed to its objectives and who are prepared to dedicate themselves to the development of its programmes. This is a glorious challenge to the government as well as to the educational, social, and political workers at this critical juncture in our history when the courage and wisdom of our people have given us yet another opportunity to shape our destiny. I earnestly appeal to all of them to recognize the urgency and uniqueness of this challenge and to rise to the occasion.

Patna

21 January 1978

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Preface

It is a sad fact that about 70 per cent of the Indian people remain virtually untouched by the present system of education. The result is that the education which is being imparted in the country at enormous public cost increases the cultural gap between the educated elite and the uneducated masses. A movement for educational transformation must, therefore, be an essential part of the larger egalitarian movement for social transformation which is implicit in the ideal of total revolution sponsored by Jayaprakash Narayan.

Educational transformation of this type requires, on the one hand, that the prevailing system of education should be altered both in form and content so as to make it more meaningful to the bulk of the people in villages and towns. It is necessary, on the other hand, to develop an egalitarian mass movement which will aim, among other things, at generating among the people a proper appreciation of the value of education and a keen desire to have it for themselves and their children.

The document published in this booklet seeks to present a policy frame of educational reform which may serve the needs of such a movement.

Jayaprakash Narayan approved the idea of preparing such a document and resolution sanctioning a cash contribution for the project was passed by the Trustees of the J.P. Institute of Human Rights in a meeting held in Bombay on 21st June 1977 under J.P.'s chairmanship. It was there decided that a framework for educational reform should be prepared under the auspices of the Citizens For Democracy and that I should approach Dr. J.P. Naik, Member-Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, for heading a panel for preparing the frame work. The proposal was later approved in a meeting of the National Executive Council of the Citizens For Democracy held on 13th August 1977.

Dr. J.P. Naik undertook the work with characteristic enthusiasm and prepared a tentative policy frame for educational reform by the end of September 1977. The document was then discussed in several

group meetings attended by 15 to 20 educationists at a time. More than 250 educationists in the country participated in the discussions in several group meetings. The document was re-drafted so as to incorporate the positive suggestions made during these discussions. The document so amended is now being published. It has been endorsed by more than 40 eminent educationalists and social leaders in the country.

The object of this document is not to add to the number of reports on educational reform which were prepared and presented by various Committees and Commissions appointed by the Government. This document is the product of a purely non-official effort, and it is submitted to the people at large and only indirectly to the Governments at the Centre and in the States. It is proposed that the document will be further discussed in a large number of seminars held in all parts of the country at different levels. It is hoped that as a result of these discussions, not only the policy frame will be further improved but the necessary atmosphere will be created for promoting a peoples' movement for education as a part of a wider movement for total revolution.

I am very grateful indeed to Dr. J.P. Naik for his work in preparing this document. I hope that it will make a modest but significant contribution to the peoples' movement for educational and social reform.

New Delhi
31st March 1978

V.M. TARKUNDE
Gen. Secretary
Citizens For Democracy

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**Summary of the Main
Findings and Recommendations**

1. The Challenge

The formal education system in India is now a gigantic enterprise with about 700,000 institutions, 3.5 million teachers, 100 million students, and an annual expenditure of Rs.25,000 million. And yet it hardly benefits the common people who are poor or very poor. Most of them are still illiterate; a large proportion of their children do not go school, and most of those that do, drop out sooner rather than later. A very small minority does climb up, through the limited vertical mobility that the system provides, and is coopted into the system which is thus legitimized. But the main beneficiaries of the system (which over-emphasizes secondary and higher education that receive about 60 per cent of the total educational expenditure) are really the rich and well-to-do classes who form the top 30 per cent of the income groups and who occupy about 70 per cent of the places at the secondary stage and about 80 per cent of the seats at the university stage. Besides, the system is not adequately related to national needs and aspirations, is highly inefficient and wasteful, and has become greatly dysfunctional, especially in higher education. Nothing short of a major educational revolution can meet the challenges of the desperate educational situation which is becoming worse every year.

2. The New Strategy

Although this educational revolution has been reported upon by several Committees and Commissions and has been continuously talked about since independence, very few basic changes have been made, and there has only been an unprecedented linear expansion of the traditional colonial system which we inherited in 1947. The principal reasons responsible for this failure are the social structure, the educational structure, and the absence of mass mobilization. We

must learn from this experience and adopt a three-fold strategy, as shown below, to achieve our objectives.

(1) Education does not function in a vacuum: it reflects the characteristics of the society which supports it, and which it tries to serve. The Indian society, which is highly stratified and inequalitarian, is really a dual society which vests economic and political power in the rich and well-to-do classes who fall within the top 30 per cent of the income groups while the vast masses of the people are marginalized and deprived of most good things of life. The education system also follows this 'dual' model and provides fairly 'good' education (i.e., education which provides access to the privileged sector) to a few who come from good socio-economic backgrounds and little education of an indifferent quality, or none at all, to the vast bulk of the people. No egalitarian transformation in education alone is possible under such a social structure. What is needed is a simultaneous effort to reduce poverty and inequality in society and to provide good education to all the people. Programmes of educational transformation must thus go hand in hand with the complementary programmes of social and economic transformation; and both programmes must be implemented in a vigorous and carefully planned strategy spread over a short period, say, ten years.

(2) The existing educational structure of the formal system has also to be radically transformed if any meaningful progress is to be made. The value system underlying education should emphasize social objectives, cooperation and team-work, complementarity of intellectual and manual work, development of skills and building up of character. The emphasis should shift from teaching to learning; all the three channels of learning, viz., full-time, part-time, and own-time, should receive equal emphasis and status; a multiple-entry system should be adopted along with considerable flexibility in the choice, content, and duration of courses; and all social institutions as well as all teaching resources of the community should be utilized for educational purposes. The content of education should be radically transformed and made relevant by the integration of intellectual and manual work, linking of education with development, emphasis on culture, science, and technology, and promotion of the values of democracy, secularism, and socialism. Standards need to be improved considerably at all stages and the whole system should be made elastic, diversified, efficient and dynamic, so that state systems, schools, and teachers have ample scope to innovate and experiment

even while conforming with a care of nationally agreed basic concepts and principles.

(3) A simultaneous and radical social and educational transformation of this type is not possible unless there is a backdrop of a mass movement which is organized on the basis of solving the day-to-day problems of the poor people (who should be conscientized and organized to fight for their rights) and giving them a basic minimum standard of living. This task is no doubt essentially political. But education cannot be politically neutral. It will be greatly assisted in the development of its own programmes by the organization of this mass movement, just as this mass mobilization itself will be greatly assisted by the intensive effort to transform education.

3. Major Programmes

The principal programmes to be developed for the educational transformation we need may be briefly indicated.

(1) *Adult Education:* The Programme of adult education, where monetary investments are comparatively small and returns both rich and immediate, should receive the highest priority; and even within the programmes, greater emphasis should be laid on the education of out-of-school youth in the age-group 15-21. The primary objective of the programme should be to help the poor to recognize the 'I' and the 'us' in them so that they can assert themselves and are able to perceive that they too can be free from fear, want, and dependency. The content of adult education should be closely related to the local environment and the needs and interests of the educants. It should ordinarily include literacy which, however, should not be over-emphasised. A massive and nation-wide programme of adult education should be developed and, from this point of view, the resources within the school system as well as those without it should be fully utilized.

(2) *Universal Elementary Education:* Elementary education (age-group 6-14) should be made universal in an intensive and sustained programme spread over to 5-10 years. Special attention has to be given to the enrolment of girls and children from the poorer sections. The multiple-entry system should be adopted and part-time education should be provided for all children who cannot attend on a full-time basis. The content of education should be radically altered, especially in introducing productive work and social service and relating it to the

environment. Standards should be improved so that the schools have greater power to attract and retain children. The administration of the programme (as well as that of adult education) should be thoroughly decentralized: unit costs should be kept down; and special assistance should be provided to those States which have a large number of non-attending children and inadequate resources. The common school system should be universally adopted.

(3) *Post-elementary Education:* The development of post-elementary education should be guided by the following principles:

- (a) Post-elementary education is not a matter of right.
- (b) While there should be no bar to an individual to receive all the education he desires, provided he claims no assistance from public funds, it should be ensured that subsidies from public funds are given at the post-elementary stage, and only to those who are socially and economically disadvantaged.
- (c) Since post-elementary education has so far been mostly a privilege of the rich and the well-to-do, special measures should be adopted to increase the access of the poor people to secondary and higher education through provision of free-studentships, grant of scholarships combined with placement and individual guidance, and extension of facilities now given to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to all socially and economically handicapped persons irrespective of caste, religion, or sex.
- (d) In particular, there should be a nation-wide and intensive effort to identify talented students from the weaker sections: they should be regarded as wards of the state and assisted to receive all the education they deserve.
- (e) There should be a policy of double-pricing in post-elementary education; the poor should have free education while the well-to-do should pay according to their capacity.
- (f) Independent schools at this stage, like public schools, should preferably be abolished. If this is not immediately possible, such schools should be under an obligation to admit 50 per cent of their students from the socially and economically handicapped groups.
- (g) Admissions to higher secondary and university education in state-supported or -aided full-time institutions should be selective in all cases where applicants exceed the available seats; and adequate seats should be reserved for the weaker sections. Selection tests should be improved.
- (h) All public examinations at the post-elementary stage should be

open to private candidates, and facilities for correspondence education should be expanded and provided in all languages.

(i) Pressures on admissions to higher education should be reduced by adoption of measures which will eventually delink the degrees from jobs.

(j) There should also be a great restraint in establishing new institutions whose locations should be carefully planned and which should be established only on the basis of need, proper maintenance of standards, and availability of resources.

(k) The existing institutions and courses should be rationalized to the extent possible and cooperative teaching and common sharing of facilities should be encouraged.

(4) *Secondary Education:* The standard of secondary education needs to be greatly improved and its content radically altered. An intensive effort needs to be made to introduce vocational courses at the end of the elementary stage, class X, and class XII. Most vocational education should be post-selection or post-decision and there should be adequate provision for industry-based and sandwich courses.

(5) *University Education and Research:* The universities and colleges should evolve integrated programmes of teaching, research, and extension, all of which should have an equal status. The undergraduate course needs to be restructured and its status raised. The system of grants-in-aid to affiliated colleges and the machinery for its administration at the State level needs considerable reform. Post-graduate level education needs considerable reform. Post-graduate teaching should be extended and improved, and both fundamental and applied research should be promoted. The structure of higher education should be diversified to suit the needs of the increasing number of students and the changing social needs. The courses should also be diversified, especially to cover the newly emerging interdisciplinary areas, and choices available to students should be substantially increased. The semester system should be adopted. The entire university system should function on a thoroughly decentralized basis and autonomy (which the state should respect, and academics exercise increasingly to provide an objective critique of society) should be passed on from the universities to the departments and affiliated colleges which should, in turn, share it with teachers and students. The system has become highly dysfunctional and hard political decisions and firm action are needed to retrieve the situation

and develop higher education to meet the national needs and aspirations.

(6) *A National Language Policy*: A national language policy should be laid down and firmly implemented. The Indian languages should be developed further and used as media of instruction at the undergraduate stage also. This increases rather than decreases the need for cultivating a better study of English for which flexible, dynamic, and modern methods of teaching should be adopted. On the whole, the language issue should be played down. While Hindi should be developed and propagated in every way possible, a long period of bilingualism at the centre and in national life should be accepted.

(7) *Administration*: Education is a participatory activity of the society as a whole, involving all individuals and all social institutions. Within the system itself, it is essential to encourage institutions at different levels to work together instead of separating and atomising them as we do at present. A centralized apparatus is not suitable for educational administration in a vast and plural society like ours. The Centre should provide a stimulating but non-coercive leadership. The States should respect the autonomy of the universities which should share it with the departments and colleges. So far as school education is concerned, there should be suitable authorities at the district (or block) level, and the local community must be associated with its school in an effective way. Care should be taken to see that, in this process, there is adequate devolution of resources to match the delegation of authority and transfer of responsibility. Similarly, the schools and teachers should have increasing freedom to innovate and experiment, and the concept of 'experimental' schools should be developed on as large a scale as possible.

(8) *Finance*: The expenditure on education should be doubled over the next ten years. Plan and non-Plan expenditure should be considered together for effective utilization. Every effort should be made to reduce unit costs and to ensure that every available rupee is made to go the longest way. While additional resources are required, the need for non-monetary inputs (e.g., better planning, human effort, and creation of a climate of hard, sustained, and dedicated work) is even more important.

4. Implementation

If these programmes are to succeed, we need a new strategy of

development. While several factors have impeded progress in the past, let us not forget that the part played by inadequate financial resources is comparatively limited. While each of the agencies involved – Centre, States, politicians, teachers, students, and the public – has contributed to this failure, the common game of passing the buck between themselves (which they often play) is no solution. Nor can the solution of the problem be sought exclusively in pedagogic remedies. The basic issues which have really impeded educational development so far are: (1) dominance of the traditional model of the formal education system; (2) uniformity, inertia, and rigidity of the educational structures; (3) neglect of micro-level cells of education; (4) exclusive dependence on the bureaucracy and non-involvement of the people; (5) failure to make the hard decisions needed, both academic and political; (6) wrong priorities; and (7) failure to develop the needed social and political forces. Unless adequate attention is given to them, no worthwhile progress is possible.

It is necessary to abandon the old approach which was bureaucratic, selective, and limited, and to organize massive programmes to solve our problems in a short time. There is a need for organizing a mass movement to bring pressure on the government to play its due role in the education of the people. A big reform movement has to be started, simultaneously within and without the system, and a well-planned and coordinated programme has to be developed in which workers within the educational system as well as social and political workers can effectively participate. The entire ethos of the system needs to be radically transformed to create a climate of sustained hard work and dedication. In all this, the work at the grass-roots level is of great significance. It is also necessary to take full advantage of the awakening among the people and to develop a massive simultaneous movement of mass education and mass mobilization. This will need a very large band of committed workers; and the success of the programme will depend upon our ability to create it.

1. Introduction

1.01 Educational reconstruction has been one of the most discussed themes in India and one may find it difficult to say something really new on the subject. The theme of social transformation has not been equally well discussed; and even less attention has been paid to the mutual relationships between social and educational transformation, both of which have to be radical. Moreover, although a good deal has been said, and often repeated *at nauseum*, about *what* is to be done (the content and programmes of change), very little thought seems to have been given to *why* the earlier attempts to bring about these changes did not succeed (diagnosis), *what* steps must now be taken to ensure that they succeed in the future (strategies), *how* the proposed changes can be best materialized (processes), and *who* will provide the leadership in bringing about these reforms (change agents). The primary object of this exercise is, therefore, to concentrate on these comparatively neglected issues and to spell out, in as unambiguous terms as possible, the minimum educational and social changes we need and their implications for official policy and public action. While doing so, we have taken note not only of the events of the past twelve years since the Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) was published, but also of the latest developments in educational thought, both in India and abroad.

2. Simultaneous Social and Educational Transformation

2.01 Education cannot be considered in a vacuum. It is a subsystem of the society and is closely related to its cultural, economic, and political aspects. One can, therefore, talk meaningfully of education only against the background of (1) the diagnosis of the major weaknesses of the existing social order, (2) the concept of a desirable society, (3) the probable process of change from the existing to the desired social order, and (4) the role of education in bringing about this social transformation.

2.02 Indian Society. It is to be regretted that the national debate which Mahatma Gandhi initiated on the desirable society has been almost abandoned for the past several years and that it has not been possible to project a clear image of the society which we would like to create in our country. This is a task to which we should now address ourselves on a priority basis. But whatever the ideological or other differences on the subject, there seems to be unanimity on the view that the most objectionable aspects of our society are inequality and poverty. For centuries, the Indian society has been a dual, highly unequal society in which a few castes or classes at the top have wielded almost all the economic, political, and knowledge power, while the vast bulk of the people, who had no access to education and no part in political power, lived in great poverty, often at sub-human levels. During the past 175 years, several changes have taken place in the over-all social scene. The princes and zamindars have disappeared; but feudal values and life-styles still dominate the society in many ways, in both political and economic spheres. The base of the ruling groups has widened to include several middle castes as well as the rural elite. The upper and middle classes, who, taken together, form the top 30 per cent of the income groups, wield most of the economic and political power and are also the principal beneficiaries of the modern system of education. At the same time, the poor people have increased considerably in absolute numbers and have been

totally marginalized. They have little control over economic resources and large numbers of them live a life of drudgery and abject poverty. They have benefited only marginally from the formal system of education and still continue to be educated through the traditional forms of incidental and non-formal education which have been even more outmoded with the passage of time. In spite of adult franchise, they have little effective political power, partly because it is not supported by either economic or knowledge power, but mainly because they are fragmented and unorganized. They thus mostly live in feudal, semi-feudal or primitive conditions, deprived of most good things of life. In spite of our acceptance of the goal of creating a new social order based on freedom, justice, equality, and the dignity of the individual, Indian society still continues to be highly stratified and unequal with a very wide gap separating the standards of living and life-styles of the few rich and well-to-do and the many who are poor and extremely poor. The most significant aspects of the social transformation we need will, therefore, include an egalitarian change wherein the vast masses of our people will be awakened and organized, will have a decent standard of living, will enjoy adequate political power, and participate effectively in decision making in all aspects of social and national life and will have the necessary facilities for their cultural and educational advancement. The most significant and essential step in securing this transformation is the awakening and organization of the people; and whether this will or will not involve a violent upheaval will depend largely upon the attitude the 'haves' will adopt. If they try to impede the awakening and organization of the people or to suppress it, violence would be inevitable. But it would be possible to avoid it if they can read the writing on the wall and adjust themselves gracefully to the inevitable.

2.03 Indian Education. India was, at one time, one of the most advanced countries of the world in education and made significant contributions to the development of man's knowledge and culture; and its seats of learning or universities attracted scholars from far and wide. At the beginning of the nineteenth century when the foundations of the modern system of education began to be laid, this ancient glory had mostly vanished. But even the remnants of the traditional educational system as had then survived made it compare favourably with many contemporary nations of the world, although the situation can only be described as unsatisfactory by modern standards. At that time, the right to the highest education was the privilege only of the

small upper crust of society, consisting invariably of the higher *varnas*. Instruction was imparted in a classical language which was not the language of the people and laid emphasis on religion and ritual. Even formal elementary education was considered to be necessary for boys belonging to the rich and well-to-do classes or the high castes only, and a very small proportion of girls and children of the common people had access to it. Moreover, education was meant only for children and youth and not for adults so that life-long education became the privilege of a microscopic minority.

2.04 It would have been in the larger interests of the country if the British administrators had built the new education system on the foundations of this traditional one. But they either ignored it or deliberately destroyed it and tried to create a new educational system, modelled after that in the U.K., with the objective of creating a class of educated persons who would know English, become familiar with Western knowledge through it, and act as interpreters and intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled. Incidentally, they also tried to spread education among girls and the common people, including the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. But they consistently refused to accept responsibility for the education of the people on administrative and financial considerations, which, in their opinion, had 'decisive weight'. They believed in the 'downward filtration theory' under which education and culture percolates inevitably from the classes to the masses. They, therefore, argued that they would only create an educated class in the first instance and that it would be the responsibility of this class, in due course, to educate the masses. They did realize this limited objective so that, when their rule came to an end in 1947, their main educational legacy was the creation of the new system of formal education through which the upper and the middle classes benefited themselves. The poor people still remained outside the system: vast numbers of their children did not go to school; a large proportion of those enrolled dropped out very early; and the percentage of literacy was only about 14.

2.05 As a part of the struggle for political freedom, attempts were made between 1900 and 1947, to create a network of national schools and universities *outside* the formal education system which was controlled by the British Administration. But these remained very limited in scale. When education was transferred to Indian control in 1921, the Provincial Education Ministers, responsible to the legislatures with an elected majority, tried to promote programmes of

adult and universal elementary education but could not achieve much, due largely to political and financial constraints. The main educational contribution of the educated classes in the pre-independence period was, therefore, to help themselves, i.e., they helped to spread secondary and higher education widely among the upper and middle classes through the private secondary schools and colleges which they organized, and they argued that once the impediment of British Rule was out of the way, they would take the earliest and the most effective steps to spread education among the people. That is why Gokhale observed that the educated people of this country would be on their trail when freedom would be won.

2.06 It is a pity that these promises to the people were mostly forgotten in the post-independence period and, instead of the most energetic drive for the education of the people which was expected, we had a large-scale linear expansion of the formal education system created by the British. It may be pointed out that we appointed a University Education Commission in 1948, a high-level Technical Man-power Committee in 1949, and a Secondary Education Commission in 1952. All these merely strengthened the British tradition of the education of the classes and over-emphasis on secondary and university education which now receive about 60 per cent of the total educational expenditure. On the other hand, no Elementary Education Commission has been appointed at all. It is true that Article 45 of the Constitution does lay down that the state shall 'strive' to provide, by 1960, compulsory and free education for all children till they reach the age of 14 years. But this provision has no effective sanction and has not been implemented even to this date. Adult education has been almost totally ignored and receives less than one per cent of the total educational outlay. Even the hope that the institutions of national education would blaze out a new trial has been destroyed because they were soon coopted within the formal education system which is now a gigantic structure with about 700,000 educational institutions, 100 million students, more than 3.5 million teachers, and an expenditure of about Rs.25,000 million which is next only to that on defence. In spite of all this expansion and all the changes made therein, however, the educational system still continues to benefit mainly the upper and middle classes for whom it was originally designed. It still makes only a marginal contribution to the education of the people, and especially of the poor people, who have only a limited access to it, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In

fact, the total injustice of the system and its unpardonable discrimination against the poor can be highlighted by the following indisputable facts:

1. About 60 per cent of the people (age 10 and over) are still illiterate and have received none of the benefits of this vast educational system.
2. About 20 per cent of the children, mostly the lowest of the low, never enter the schools at all. They are born poor and continue to be poor and the formal system of education bypasses them altogether.
3. Of those children that enter the schools, nearly half drop out by class V and nearly three-fourths drop out by class VIII; only about 15 per cent reaches class XII, and less than one per cent get the first degree.
4. As pointed out above, the system accords very low priority to programmes such as adult education, universal elementary education, or non-formal education which would benefit the masses especially the poor. On the other hand, it accords high priority and invests the bulk of its resources in secondary and higher education which benefit mostly the top 30 per cent of the population.
5. The children from poor families generally get an unfair deal in the system whose entire ethos is oriented to the needs and aspirations of the upper and middle classes and which still continues to use English as the medium of instruction in higher education and thereby encourages the use of English as a medium at the school stage also.

2.07 It would, therefore, be incorrect to describe the existing educational system as an instrument for educating the people; the evidence adduced above clearly shows that it is more appropriately designed for *not* educating them. In fact, the primary objective of the system is not to spread education among the people, but to function as an efficient and merciless mechanism to *select* individuals who should continue to remain in the privileged sector or enter it afresh. It does not discharge even this task impartially and, as we shall see presently, functions in such a biased fashion that those who are already in the privileged sector find it easier to continue therein while the underprivileged find that the access to the privileged sector through the portals of education is becoming more restricted and increasingly

dependent on chance rather than on merit. The main achievement of the system, therefore, is to condemn the bulk of the children of the common people as drop-outs and failures and to consign them to a life of drudgery and poverty which has hardly any parallel in the contemporary world or even in our own earlier history.

2.08 This neglect of the people of India, in whom the Constitution vests the ultimate sovereign authority, is harmful, not only to the common man, but also to the health and development of the nation as a whole. As native talent is randomly distributed among the people, we have one-seventh of the potential talent of the world; and yet our achievements in every sphere are negligible for the simple reasons that a vast reservoir of our talent remains unidentified and uncultivated. This jeopardizes the future of the entire country and eventually of the upper and middle classes as well. Even from the point of view of narrow self-interest, therefore, the ruling groups must realize that they are harming themselves and the ultimate development of the country itself by keeping the common man of India continually deprived of education and other good things of life.

2.09 Education and Society. It will thus be seen that our educational and social systems reinforce one another: both are highly unjust and inequitable; the beneficiaries of both are the upper and middle classes; and both marginalize the common people. What is worse, the inherent tendency of our system of formal education (on which we place an almost exclusive emphasis) is to continue the *status quo* and perpetuate the wide differences between the rich and well-to-do on the one hand and the poor people on the other. As is well known, our educational system has a small group of good quality and prestigious schools (including the public and English-medium schools) which are availed of by the rich and well-to-do and a large number of government and other publicly maintained schools whose standards are unsatisfactory and which are mostly used by the poor people. The children of the rich and well-to-do classes, therefore, get into the good quality schools and later come to hold important and prestigious positions in life for which the schools qualify them. On the other hand, a significant proportion of the children of the poor people do not enter the school system at all, or get into the poor quality schools, drop out sooner rather than later, and excepting for a few who get into the privileged sector, generally get back into the same underprivileged social groups to which they originally belonged. Besides, the children from the well-to-do classes who enter the system earlier study under

better conditions and stay longer, get an essential superiority over the children from the poor social groups who have none of these advantages, and find it comparatively easy to continue in the privileged group. Even if a child from the poorer social groups has the same attainments as that of a child from the privileged groups (and this really involves a much larger effort), he is still at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* his well-to-do rival in a society where 'who knows who' is so important. The net result of all these factors is that, our inequitable and hierarchical educational system leads to an inequitable and hierarchical social system, just as the inequitable educational system arose, in the first instance, from the inequitable social system itself.

2.10 This does not mean that there are no forces for change in the system. In fact, there is an under-current of egalitarian change, in both education and society, which reflects itself through such programmes as universalization of elementary education, provision of scholarships to talented but economically handicapped children, special effort for the spread of education among girls or schemes of special assistance for scheduled castes and tribes. Unfortunately, slogans have been more forceful than action in these important programmes so that all that we have been able to achieve is to provide some vertical mobility to a fortunate few among the deprived groups. But such individuals are readily coopted within the system which merely helps to legitimize it, in spite of all its grave injustices to the common man.

2.11 What is the precise relationship between educational and social transformation? The most commonly accepted view romanticizes this relationship and argues that we must begin with a radical transformation in education which, in its turn, will bring about a radical transformation in society. On the other hand, there is also a view that the social structure will always be reflected within the education system which it dominates so that no worthwhile educational reform is possible unless a social revolution is first brought about. The truth is probably neither so simple nor so direct. The educational system has a duty to make a critical analysis of the social system, to focus attention as its internal contradiction and on the gap between slogans and practice, and to highlight the need for structural changes, where necessary, including those needed within the educational system itself. Education can thus play a useful role in promoting the desire for a radical social change and also help in deciding the nature of such change as well as the manner of bringing it about. Similarly, education is essential to complete and consolidate a

social change decided and implemented through political means, whether by bullets or by the ballot. The education system can also remedy social deficiencies which are due to educational factors. But it can have little effect on social deficiencies which arise elsewhere, say, in the economic or political sub-systems. We must also remember that, while it is comparatively easy to introduce educational reforms that support the existing social structure, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement radical educational reforms which threaten the existing social structure or run counter to its imperatives. All things considered, it appears that, if we desire to get out of this vicious circle wherein an *inegalitarian* society creates an *inegalitarian* educational system and *vice versa*, we must mount a big offensive on both social and educational fronts.

2.12 The major implications of this proposal, for both social and educational reforms, can be briefly indicated.

(1) In *society*, the basic minimum change required is to narrow down the existing wide gap between the life-styles and standards of living of the upper and middle classes and the common people by,

- eliminating or at least minimizing all direct and indirect forms of exploitation;
- imposing limits and curbs on the consumption of the rich and the well-to-do through a modification of the existing arbitrary and *inegalitarian* wage-structure and other allied measures;
- ensuring a basic minimum standard of living to the people through (a) an emphasis on increased production of goods and services needed by the common man, (b) a guarantee of employment at a reasonable wage to all able-bodied persons who are willing to work, and (c) the organization of an efficient and nation-wide public distribution system of food-stuffs and other essential commodities.

An important implication of this policy will be to reduce the wide gulf between urban and rural areas and to improve the standards of living of the rural people, especially of agricultural labour and small and marginal farmers.

(2) In *education*, the corresponding basic minimum change required is to make the common people, rather than the upper and middle classes, the principal beneficiaries of the educational system. This will imply, among other things,

giving the highest priority to the programmes for the education of the common people such as adult education including liquidation of illiteracy, non-formal education of out-of-school youth, and universal elementary education including the adoption of the common school system;

utilizing the bulk of additional resources available on programmes for the education of the people so that they, and not secondary and higher education, receive the larger share of total educational expenditure;

changing the basic values underlying the system and orienting them to the common people instead of to the upper and middle classes;

adopting the regional languages as media of instruction at all stages;

transforming the content of education to suit the ethos of work and production and the imperatives of national development;

improving the access of students from economically handicapped groups to secondary and higher education and taking suitable measures for optimizing their performance;

eliminating or reducing the subsidies in secondary and higher education that now go to the upper and middle classes;

increasing financial support to the deserving students from deprived social groups; and

restructuring educational administration on the basis of decentralization of decision-making authority so that the common people are actively involved in planning and implementation of their own educational programmes.

Major reason for our failure to bring about a radical reconstruction of the educational system in the past has been the fact that we have ignored the close relationship between social and educational transformation and the consequent need for a simultaneous effort on both the fronts. The most significant aspect of our future strategy of educational development should, therefore, be to plan and implement a radical, simultaneous and complementary programme of social and educational reform.

3. A New Concept and Structure of Education

3.01 A detailed discussion of the social transformation to be attempted as a part of this package deal of simultaneous social and educational transformation is outside the scope of this exercise which concentrates on the educational transformation we need. The central programme of this transformation is a radical reform of the value system, processes, and organization of the formal system of education which we have laboured over 150 years to create and which has now become a gigantic enterprise which mostly keeps the poor people out does not even provide good education to the bulk of its students, and also hinders the social transformation we seek. The task is of the highest priority; and any delay in its implementation implies that the size of the formal system and its inertia will increase further in the meantime and that this will add to the cost and energy required to reform it.

3.02 *Value System.* The existing educational system lays greater emphasis on individualism, competition, verbal fluency or linguistic ability, and mere acquisition of information. What is even worse, the ethos of the existing system is highly authoritarian where values such as equality, love of truth, or spirit of enquiry cannot be fostered. In the new concept of education, we should recognize the significance of social objectives, cooperation and team-work, the complementarity of intellectual and manual work, promotion of skills, and the building up of character. Similarly, great emphasis will have to be placed on promoting a scientific outlook on life and the basic values of pursuit of truth, equality, freedom, justice and dignity of the individual.

3.03 *An Integrated, Participatory System of Formal and Non-Formal Education.* The existing system places an almost exclusive emphasis on formal education and on teaching instead of on learning. In the new system, emphasis will have to be shifted from teaching to learning and incidental and non-formal education should receive an equal. If not even greater emphasis, and the formal, incidental, and

non-formal systems should be blended together in an integrated fashion. In the existing system, there is only one channel of full-time attendance. In the new system, all the three channels of full-time, part-time, and own-time education should be freely used and should have equal status so that it would be possible for a student to transfer himself from one to the other according to his needs. The existing system operates on the basis of a single-point entry, sequential annual promotions, and an almost unbroken, continuous stretch of education. In the new system, recurrent education should be developed and promoted; and there should be several points of entry as well as flexibility for condensing or prolonging the duration of courses of levels. It would, therefore, be possible for a student to join and step off the education system whenever and as often as may be necessary, and also to regulate the pace of his studies. The existing system places an almost exclusive emphasis on full-time professional teachers and on the school as the sole educational institution. In the new system, all teaching resources available in the community should be utilized and all social institutions should be used for educational purposes. In fact, the new educational system should be extremely flexible to meet the needs of life-long learning for every individual. It should also allow for the fullest participation by institutions and individuals ordinarily considered to be outside the educational system and also move towards abolishing the distinction between teachers (who are really senior students) and students (who in effect are junior teachers) because every individual should be learning whatever he is interested in from others and simultaneously teaching whatever he can to those who are interested to learn it from him. In fact, the new educational system may rightly be described as *education of the people, for the people, and by the people.*

3.04 *Relevance and Transformation of Content.* A major weakness of the existing system is the lack of relevance of most of what we teach, not only to the poor people who are outside the system, but even to the upper and middle classes who are inside it. This irrelevance arises from several factors such as,

- an over-emphasis on mere acquisition of information;
- the common practice of framing curricula with an ascending objective, viz., the curriculum of the elementary school prepares a student for the secondary stage, the secondary school fits a student

for a college and almost unfits him for everything else, and a B.A. degree tries to make a person eligible for a master's degree or a well-paid and generally white-collar job. Such curricula obviously become irrelevant to those who do not proceed to the next stage and these generally constitute the vast majority) or fail to get a job; the organization of the curriculum mainly on the basis of middle-class values which cannot be generalized and which have no relevance to the life and needs of the vast majority of the people; the practice of centralized curriculum construction and the great emphasis placed on uniformity rather than on diversity which makes it difficult, if not impossible, to relate education to local environment or to individual aptitudes and capacities; and the failure to adjust the content of education to changing social or national needs, due mainly to the inertia of the system.

3.05 This irrelevance of education progressively alienates the intellectual community from the people and the basic problems of the society. It is, therefore, obviously necessary to take appropriate steps to remove these causes that lead to irrelevance in the content of education. But this is not enough; and we must also adopt a number of positive measures to make the content of education relevant to social transformation and national development. Among these, the following deserve emphasis:

(1) The cultural aspects of education which are generally neglected at present should receive considerable emphasis. Students should be helped to 'discover' India, to be patriotic, to take a proper pride in their cultural heritage, and yet to be sensitive to modern ideas and values and to the weaknesses in our own tradition which have to be overcome.

(2) Mahatma Gandhi had rightly diagnosed that the traditional middle class values of glorifying intellectual work and denigrating manual labour (which had dominated our educational system and led to a total divorce between work and education) had disastrous effects, on both the individual and the society. What a healthy, egalitarian, and non-exploitative society needed was a citizen who was a good productive worker as well as an educated and cultured individual. He, therefore, advocated the view that good education must reunite work and education. This would make the upper and middle classes better individuals because participation in socially useful productive work, not only develops skills, but cultivates the intellect and values as well.

It will also enrich the masses who would receive education and be able to resist exploitation through organized effort.

(3) In a poor society like that of ours, development is so significant and urgent that, over the next 10-15 years we must make every person development-minded and induce him to work intensively for it on the basis of the highest priority. Such a national objective cannot be realized if the education system which, as pointed out earlier, now involves about 16 per cent of the entire population and consumes nearly four per cent of the national income were to be neutral to this developmental effort or, as often happens, pursues even contrary objectives. We just cannot afford to run education and development as two separate and parallel (or even partially contradictory) systems. It would be far more effective and economical to run them as complementary systems, each supporting the other. This can happen only if development, like work, also becomes a medium of education and all students and teachers are involved in appropriate programmes of development at all stages of education.

(4) The proper teaching of science and an appropriate technology must be emphasized at all stages of education. Science can be of great help to rid our traditional society of superstition, fatalism, and irrational fear and in promoting the rational temper which a modern society needs. Appropriate technology can help us to abolish poverty and ill-health and to raise the standards of living of the people. Every citizen must, therefore, be aware of the potential of science and technology and adequate competence to use them.

(5) Great emphasis is to be laid on the ethos necessary for the democratic, socialist, and secular society we desire to create. Negatively, it implies a fight against traditional values and customs which impede the creation of this new society, e.g., casteism, communalism, inequality of men and women, of feudal and capitalist life-styles. Positively, it implies the development of such values and skills as tolerance, self-restraints, concern for others, commitment to basic human values and a capacity to fight and suffer for them if necessary, ability to work together with other individuals and groups in shared programmes with common objectives, and willingness and capacity to resolve conflicts through discussion, give and take and other peaceful means.

3.06 Standards. Education is a double-edged tool. If it is of good quality, it helps individual growth, social transformation, and national development. But if proper standards are not maintained, it can lead

both individuals and societies down the hill to personal disaster or social disintegration. Maintaining the quality of education thus becomes a task of supreme importance. Relevance of content is an important but only one aspect of the problem. The second is the provision of adequate facilities – institutions, teachers, equipment. The third is the creation of a climate of hard, sustained, and dedicated work by teachers and students because education is essentially a stretching process. It should be emphasized, however, that standards should not be measured, as at present, merely by the extent of information acquired by the students or by their linguistic ability, especially in English. They should be measured in broader individual and social terms by the total personality development of the students and by the social commitments and contributions of students, teachers, and educational institutions.

3.07 In the existing educational system, the standards of education maintained are good in a small number of institutions which, as pointed out earlier, are used by the small upper crust of rich and well-to-do persons. On the other hand, the standards are poor or even deplorable in the vast majority of the institutions which are used by the bulk of the people. In the new system of education, there is no place for this dualism. This does not, however, mean an indiscriminate equalization of all institutions. In secondary and higher education, in particular, there would no doubt be some high quality and pace-setting institutions in every sector. But the position would differ from the present one in two significant ways. On the one hand, access to these high quality institutions would not be confined to the privileged as at present, and effort would be made to ensure that, through a well-planned programme of cultivation of talent, scholarships and placement, these institutions would also be availed of by talented children from the under-privileged social groups. On the other hand, the standards in the bulk of the institutions which are very unsatisfactory at present would be substantially raised and no institution would be allowed to fall below certain prescribed levels.

3.08 Flexibility, Diversity, and Dynamism. The present educational system is based on an over-emphasis on centralization and uniformity and has consequently become rigid and inelastic: the axiom that either all move or none moves can only make everyone immobile. In a vast and plural society like that of ours, the attempts to create a uniform and rigid educational system is foredoomed to failure. It will also be counter-productive because every such attempt

will fall below the capacity of good schools which will not be able to utilize their full potential just as it will be beyond the reach of the weaker institutions and lead to still greater inefficiency. India stands for unity in diversity. We should, therefore, try to evolve a unity in the fundamentals at the national level and then evolve a highly decentralized, flexible, and dynamic system which provides adequate scope for diversity, experimentation and innovation by state systems, schools, and teachers.

4. Programmes

4.01 In this section we shall discuss a few programmes of high priority which will have to be developed over the next ten years or so to provide good education for all our people and to create a national system of education which will meet the needs and aspirations of the people.

A. ADULT EDUCATION

4.02 *Significance and Priority.* We shall begin this discussion with adult education (an adult being defined in terms of the Constitution as a person above 21 years of age) because we attach the highest significance to this programme. We believe that illiteracy and lack of 'proper' adult education is a serious impediment, not only to the growth of the individuals concerned but to the socio-economic development of the country as a whole. We also believe that any investment in adult education, especially of the illiterate poor, will yield quick results in terms of socio-economic progress and will be extremely rewarding in proportion to its quantum. It is also our considered view that a massive programme of adult education should have been developed on a priority basis as soon as we became free and that illiteracy should have been liquidated within a few years of independence. But this priority was unfortunately not adopted. The Constitution gave the franchise to all adults, but it made no provision for adult education which would have made it more meaningful. On the other hand, it adopted the traditional view that we should provide universal elementary education for children in a short period (1950-60) and that the problem of adult education would solve itself over the years. This has led to a neglect of adult education in the post-independence period; and as the implementation of the programme of elementary education itself has been delayed, we have really missed the bus. The percentage of literacy increased from about 14 in 1947 to only about 30 in 1971. What is even worse, the people have not been

strengthened and organized to participate in development so that national development itself has received a great set-back. It is high time that these wrong policies were abandoned. We must realize that the programme of educating and organizing the people to create a new social order cannot be implemented except through adult education.

4.03 *Objectives and Content.* We believe the initiative in the creation of the new egalitarian social order will have to be taken by the poor and oppressed people themselves. They can effectively do so if they are made aware of their innate strengths and of the exploitative social reality around them, if they are actively involved in socially productive useful work (i.e., are guaranteed useful employment), if they are assisted to create institutions which can give them a sense of self-reliance and a capacity to raise their standards of living, and if they are fearless and organized to resist all exploitation effectively. The object of adult education of the poor, therefore, can only be to awaken the 'I' and the 'us' in them so that they can assert themselves, both individually and collectively, and to enable them to perceive that they can be free from fear, want, and dependency. We must especially guard against the danger, ever present, that adult education may be used as a tool for educating the poor to their present marginal status, conformity and resignation or for encouraging escapist trends. This does not mean direct political mobilization which is a task for political parties. But it does mean that the education of the poor must have an essential political component to enable them to come into their own.

4.04 The content of adult education of the common people who are mostly illiterate should ordinarily include literacy which is an essential prerequisite for autonomous access to the growing knowledge in the world. But it need not be overemphasized. A literate adult who has a closed mind and does not use his literacy. For continuously adding to his knowledge is no better than an illiterate. It is also necessary to emphasize that the best learning takes place, not in school, but in work and life situations, that learning, working, and living are inseparable, and that each of these acquires a meaning only when fully correlated with the others. This is especially true of adults so that a literacy programme unrelated to the working and living conditions of the learners or to the challenges of the environment and the developmental needs of the country is not likely to enthuse or lead to any meaningful individual or social gains. While emphasizing the acquisition of literacy skills by the illiterate people, therefore, a programme of adult education must also have a broader content of

education relevant to the environment and to the immediate felt needs of the learners and the challenges of improving their own socio-economic status and national development in which they must themselves participate with conviction and enthusiasm. In particular, such a programme should contain an 'appropriate mix' of the following themes suited to the needs of different individuals and groups:

- (1) Development of vocational skills to improve earning capacity.
- (2) General Education (including health education and family planning).
- (3) Citizenship education (including essential political education).
- (4) Development studies or a knowledge of the developmental problems of the country in which their own problems are rooted, the role of the people in the solution of these problems and their actual involvement in social and developmental programmes.
- (5) Physical education, games and sports, recreation, and participative cultural activities.

The programme should also be extremely flexible with regard to duration, time, location or instructional arrangements and should be as diversified as the needs and capacities of the individuals or groups participating in the programmes. Consequently, the planning of the exact content of the curricula needed by specific individuals or groups can never be done centrally. They would have to be intensively local and dialogic in the sense that they should be evolved, in a highly decentralized fashion, by the local worker in discussion with the adults with whom he is working. All that a central organization can and should do is (1) to create a cadre of good and sensitized workers, (2) to provide them with good training in social objectives, curricular construction, and appropriate methods of teaching and evaluation, and (3) to put out a large variety of well-prepared and tested teaching and learning material from which each worker can choose what suits his requirements best. The critical significance of these central roles is obvious.

4.05 Motivation. Adults cannot be made a captive audience and have to be motivated to learn. This will be possible only to the extent they perceive that the programmes offered are of use to them. The best motivation is seen where an attempt is made to create awareness or when the programmes involve them in the solution of their day-to-day

problems and strive to bring about some improvement in their life, however small. Good workers who have established a rapport with the people, a well-organized programme which fits the needs and interests of the learners, and good methods of teaching which make learning a joyful, cooperative enterprise between the teacher and students, will be of great help. It will also be of advantage if adult education can be made an integral part of a development programme or a social movement.

4.06 Organization. Perhaps the most difficult and complex issues about adult education relate to organization: motivating adults, selection and training of workers, production of teaching and learning materials, and, above all, the actual development of this massive programme on the ground. The problem assumes greater significance because it cannot be solved by money alone. There is enough experience to show that, if money is poured into the scheme without the other essential inputs or adequate preparation, we will only end up with corruption and bogus statistics. The non-monetary inputs are, therefore, crucial, not only to save money which is certainly not over-abundant, but to save the movement itself. Yet another factor which deserves serious attention is that the adult education movement can also be used to stimulate the young to national service and to channelize their energies and idealism in fruitful directions and thus make them development-oriented. It would be almost criminal not to explore and exploit the fullest potential of this possibility.

4.07 In the light of past experience, we find that three alternative approaches are possible. If quality is the main objective and not numbers, the movement may be organized on a selective basis, by giving full encouragement and providing the needed facilities and financial support in all cases where one finds dedicated and competent workers or adults desiring to learn. Alternatively, quality can still be maintained and numbers can be increased to some extent, if it is organized as a *mass campaign* in a small selected area(s) where conditions are favourable. While both these methods are important and should be widely used in the early stages of the campaign, our ultimate objective should be to adopt the third approach and to develop programmes of adult education as a *nation-wide movement of good quality*. This is the most difficult challenge and will demand supreme skills of organization, as a mass movement and a massive involvement of all agencies and individuals capable of participating therein.

4.08 To what extent can we use the teachers and students in the existing formal system for promoting literacy and adult education? The potential of the proposal is obviously immense because there are nearly 16 million students (from the secondary school upwards) and nearly four million teachers and administrators who can be used as workers for this programme. One view is that the inertia and inefficiency of the system and the class orientation of the teachers and students will make it impossible to work out the scheme in its proper perspective. Another view is that it would be wrong to ignore the formal system altogether, especially because the development of this programme can be an instrument to start the process of transformation within the formal system itself. Moreover, it may be contended that a massive programme of adult education cannot be developed without fully exploiting the large intra-structure of the formal system. We do not, therefore, think that this is an 'either-or' issue. We must involve students, teachers, and institutions within the formal system of education on a *selective* and increasing basis. Any voluntary initiative shown in this programme by individual schools or groups of teachers and students should receive due recognition and support. There should also be adequate incentives for individual educational institutions to participate in the programme by linking such participation to developmental grants for buildings, libraries, laboratories, etc.; and it should be possible for students to participate in the scheme and to earn a part of their maintenance costs. Even the possibility of making participation in the programme obligatory for all teachers and students (as a part of the national service scheme) should be explored; and a beginning in this direction can certainly be made by individual educational institutions committed to the programme. At the same time, we must realize that there are definite advantages in beginning this programme in a big way *outside* the formal educational system by utilizing the large teaching resources, both individual and institutional, which are available in the society and which, though largely unused or underutilized at present, can be harnessed for the programmes. For instance, village panchayats, cooperative societies, youth clubs, mahila mandals, etc., can play useful roles; and large numbers of educated persons who are not professional teachers but who have the necessary enthusiasm and commitment could be selected and trained to organize literacy and other adult education programmes.

4.09 All things considered, it appears that we are more likely to

obtain the best results only if we combine the various approaches and techniques suitably. The backdrop of a mass movement is in any case inescapable. But against it, we may combine the selective and mass campaign approaches. The workers can be selected, on a large scale, from both among the teachers and the students within the system as well as from the stock of enthusiastic and committed individuals outside the education system, and especially from among the poor people themselves. If anything, the latter may prove to be the better and larger source for the supply of key workers.

4.10 In the development of this programme, voluntary organizations will have a significant role to play. Drawing upon non-formal resources of society will call for more, not less, organizational effort on the part of government. There should be special schemes to assist them and an adequate organizational effort to harness their services. Institutions known for their competence and commitment should be given a large measure of autonomy to innovate and experiment. Similarly, industry and other employers of labour should be under legal obligation to make their employees literate and, where necessary, certain forms of assistance (such as training of workers) may be made available to them. Literacy and adult education programmes should also be organized for all illiterate workers employed on government projects and development works.

B. OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH (AGE-GROUP 15-21)

4.11 What has been said above about the education of adults will also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the education of out-of-school youth (age-group 15-21) which, in our opinion, is the second major programme for the education of the people. The significance of this group is immense (it is about 85 per cent of the total population of this age) and investment in its education will obviously pay rich and early dividends. The motivation of this group is stronger and its educability greater. As peer group learning is very significant, we can effectively use students as well as persons selected and trained from among the group itself, for the development of the programme. Vocational education has a special import for this group most of whom will be looking for a career. We will also have to provide adequate opportunities for continuing formal education, interrupted for various reasons, to all those who desire to improve their career prospects through such education.

4.12 Programmes of adult education, whether for out-of-school youth (age-group 15-21) or for adults (age 21 and over), will need the production of a large volume of imaginatively planned teaching and learning materials of the best quality, not only for literacy work but also for post-literacy and follow-up work with the neo-literates. A wide network of libraries and reading-rooms will also have to be organized for the purpose. Effective use may also be made of posters and wall-papers. The universities will have to play an important role in generating materials, conducting research, evaluation, and training of workers. The mass media, such as the press and radio, can play a major role in the promotion of the massive programmes of adult education we have in view and should be fully utilized. The development of the programme in rural areas and for women will need special efforts and emphasis. Needless to say, it will also be necessary to organize a massive programme for the training of workers and to develop a good system of supervision, evaluation, and continuous monitoring. The programme will have to be launched immediately and will have to be kept up at a very high pitch for about ten years. This is one of the most challenging tasks that education in this country has ever faced.

C. UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

4.13 We shall now turn to the discussion of the third programme for the education of the people, viz., the provision of universal elementary education for children in the age-group (6-14) with which we shall link the problem of pre-school education also.

4.14 *Past Achievements and Failures.* While we have travelled far ahead of our position in 1947, the remaining journey to the destination visualized in Article 45 of the Constitution is very long and difficult. This will be clear from our achievements in the four specific goals of the programme, viz., (a) universal provision of facilities, (b) universal enrolment, (c) universal retention, and (d) improvement of standards.

(1) The first step in the programme is to provide an elementary school within easy reach of every child. So far we have been able to provide a primary school within walking distance from the home of most children in the age-group 6-11 and a similar facility at the middle school stage is available for about 60 per cent of the children in the age-group 11-14. It will, therefore, be possible to realize the goal of universal provision of schooling facilities, i.e., providing a primary and middle school within walking distance from the home of every child

within a few years and without much difficulty.

(2) The next step is to ensure that every child is enrolled in a school. The enrolments in 1975-76 in classes I-V stood at 66.5 million and those in classes VI-VIII, at 16.5 million. These figures, however, conceal a good deal of bogus enrolment which is proportionately greater in the more backward States. If universal enrolment in the age-group 6-14 is to be reached within ten years, i.e., by 1985-86, these enrolments will have to increase to 85 million and 50 million respectively. In other words, there would have to be an additional enrolment of 52 million in about ten years or about 52 lakhs per year as against an average of about 24 lakhs a year achieved in the past 30 years. This, in itself, is difficult; and it becomes all the more so because the children who are now out of school consist mostly of the hard core of non-attendants, viz., girls and children from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections. Unless a major effort is made, it will not be possible to reach the goal of universal enrolment.

(3) The third step in the programme is to ensure that there is universal retention, i.e., no child once enrolled in school drops out till he completes the elementary course or reaches the age of 14 years. Unfortunately, a great weakness of the present programme is that there is a large proportion of drop-outs or push-outs, due partly to the irrelevance and poor quality of education, but mainly to the insistence on full-time attendance which is not possible for children of poor families who are required to work. There is clear evidence to show that the proportion of such drop-outs (or wastage) between classes I-V and classes I-VIII is very high (about 60 per cent and 75 per cent respectively) and has remained almost unchanged during the past 30 years. The problem of universal retention is, therefore, even more difficult to be solved.

(4) Side by side these programmes of expansion, steps have also to be taken to improve the quality of education because Article 45 implies both a quantitative and a qualitative target. Unfortunately, our failure in this regard is also dismal because standards of elementary education have continued to be unsatisfactory. This is probably the most difficult aspects of the task and will need the most intensive and sustained efforts.

4.15 *A New Strategy.* The reasons for this failure are both social and educational. There has been a lack of political commitment and the programme has never received adequate priority and resources. Raising the standards of living, over-all development, massive cam-

paigns of adult education, and active involvement of the people are all absolutely essential for its success. But none of these have been given due attention. Programmes of this type have also to be implemented quickly as crash programmes, say, in a period of 5-10 years. But we have made them long-term affairs which have only made the problem more difficult through increase of population, rise in unit costs, and slowing down of the tempo. The content of education has been largely irrelevant and the quality of education, poor. Consequently, the attracting and holding power of the schools has been very low. Above all, the greatest handicap has been the formal system of education which we have adopted: it increases costs through its insistence on the exclusive employment of full-time teachers, keeps millions of children out by its insistence of full-time attendance, and converts the bulk of the children from poor families who are required to work into drop-outs or push-outs.

4.16 We should learn from these lessons of history and adopt a new strategy to make a success of this programme in the years ahead. Some of its major aspects are given below:

(1) The problem should be solved in a short-term plan of ten years at the most.

(2) At present, we operate on the basis of a system of single-point entry and make fresh enrolments in class I only (at about the age of six years), and expect these children to rise up to the next higher class each year and to remain in school till they complete the elementary school or the age of 14 years. This slows down the progress very greatly, especially because of the large prevalence of drop-outs. We should give up this outmoded system which does not suit our needs. Instead, we should adopt a multi-point entry and an elastic system of promotions so that even older children who are out of school can be brought simultaneously under instruction. Similarly, we should give up our insistence on full-time education and part-time education should be made available to all children who are required to work and cannot attend school on a whole-time basis. In other words, while the existing stream of full-time education which admits children in Grade I at about the age of six, and takes them up sequentially to class VIII at about the age of 14 plus, should continue. But it should not be the only stream of providing elementary education to children and should be supplemented by three other parallel streams to suit the needs of different categories of children. These will include: (a) part-time education to children in the age-group 6-11 who cannot go to school

on a whole-time basis in order to enable them to become functionally literate or to complete class V; (b) part-time education for children in the age-group 11-14 who have never been to school, or dropped out very early, in order to enable them to become functionally literate or complete class V; and (c) part-time continuation education in classes VI-VIII for all children who have completed class V, either on a full-time or on a part-time basis, but who cannot continue to study further on a whole-time basis. These four different streams, taken together, will meet the educational needs of all children in the age-group of 6-14 and bring them under instruction. They will also solve the problem of non-enrolment or drop-outs and ensure that all children in the age-group 6-14 shall remain under instruction, on a full-time basis if possible, and on a part-time basis if necessary. It is also necessary to emphasize that, for the programmes of part-time education, we need not depend upon full-time professional teachers alone. The large unutilized teaching resources in the community should be mobilized here also as in adult education.

(3) Special attention should be paid to the education of girls and of the children of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other weaker sections of the society.

(4) The massive adult education campaigns recommended earlier can be a great asset to this programme because the education of the parents is the best guarantee for enrolling and retaining children in schools. Further motivational and economic support for the programme would be obtained if simultaneous efforts are made to improve the standards of living of the common people.

(5) It must be realized that the programme can be handled successfully only on the basis of decentralization. In the last analysis, this programme involves the planning of the education of each individual child (which can be done only at the community level) and the planning of education of every community (which can be best done at the block or district levels). This implies a highly decentralized and yet effective administration far in advance of anything we have attempted so far. A large variety of models is available for the purpose and we may also design our own new models. What is needed is a good deal of innovation, commitment, courage, and firm decisions.

(6) One of the principal reasons which has hindered the progress of universal elementary education is the paucity of financial resources. If this is to be overcome, the unit cost of educating a child at the elementary stage should be kept within reasonable limits through such

measures as modification of the wage-structure, adoption of part-time education, and increasing pupil-teacher ratio, preferably through the use of the double-shift system. What is even more important, we must plug the several loopholes in the existing system which lead to tremendous waste. Simultaneously, we should accord higher priority to the programme so that it gets larger resources, both in absolute terms and in proportion.

(7) The States such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Rajasthan present a difficult problem. They have large populations of scheduled castes and tribes. There are strong prejudices against the education of girls. The number of non-attending children they have is proportionately larger while the overall resources available to them are much smaller. Unless special efforts are made and special financial assistance is given by the Centre, they will not be able to tackle this huge problem satisfactorily. Each State will have to make similar special efforts for its own less developed or backward areas.

4.17 Content and Quality. The content and quality of elementary education and its universalization are interdependent. If the content of education is relevant and its quality good, the attracting and holding power of the schools increases and this helps in universalization itself. Without this support from within the school system, no external effort can ever succeed. Even if it were to succeed, there is hardly any point in universalizing bad education.

4.18 The basic reform in the content of elementary education is to introduce productive work and social service activities as integral elements of the educational process. This will bring the hand and the brain together and also emphasize social rather than the individual objectives of education. Mahatma Gandhi was absolutely correct when he insisted on this reform as basic to the transformation of the educational system from its *middle class* to *mass* orientation. But the introduction of this reform is far from easy. It is not merely a question of training teachers or providing equipment. It is also a basic issue of changing social values and it will not be possible to implement this programme within the school unless we also make a simultaneous effort to make work and social service respected in the wider society itself. It must be emphasized, however, that this reform is meant mainly for the upper and middle classes who have education but do not work with their hands and who consider work-experience or social service as an irrelevant waste of time for their children. Its counterpart for the children of the poor who work with their hands but receive no

education is part-time education. We need, therefore, not only the introduction of work in formal full-time education but a large-scale adoption of the system of part-time instruction which will build education round work.

4.19 The other major change needed in the curriculum at the elementary stage is to link it closely with the local environment and to make it relevant in itself and not merely a preparation for the secondary school. At present, we have a system of centralized curriculum-construction: the best curricula are supposed to be prepared at the national level and handed down to the States; and each State insists on having a common curriculum for all the schools in its area. Such a centrally planned curriculum cannot provide for local variations and often becomes irrelevant and inert to the learners. Similarly, the curricula at the elementary stage are generally designed to prepare the student for the secondary stage and hence they become irrelevant to the needs of the learners, and especially to the later life of the children, if they do not continue their studies beyond elementary education. If such situations are to be avoided, we must plan the content of education very differently. It should be planned as an end in itself and to suit the local environment, as a result of a continuing dialogue between the teachers and learners. Needless to say, such curricula will vary from area to area, and even in the same area, from situation to situation. What we have to do, therefore, is to decentralize the curriculum-making process and hand down, not ready-made curricula, but the skills of curriculum-construction to all elementary school teachers.

4.20 The Common School. As was pointed out earlier, our inequalitarian society has created an inequalitarian system of education which segregates the rich and well-to-do from the poor, the children of the rich and well-to-do attend the minority of 'good' schools which include all prestigious institutions, public schools, English-medium schools, and quality institutions (most of which are private) while the common people have access mostly to the government-supported schools which are generally of poor quality. This segregation must end immediately throughout the educational system. But probably the most urgent step needed is to end it at the elementary stage so that all children, in the impressionable age-group 6-14, rub shoulders with each other, irrespective of social class or caste, and learn and work together. This would be a very effective method of promoting equality, social cohesion, and national integration. We are, therefore, strongly

of the view that the common school system must be adopted immediately at the elementary stage. This is basically an urban issue; and strongest opposition to the proposal comes from the top vested interests who use the best schools to perpetuate their privileged position. Only firm political action can break it.

4.21 Pre-school Education. Another major reform is to extend the pre-school education, which is now an almost exclusive monopoly of the urban and well-to-do classes, to the rural areas and the poor people. This cannot be done on the basis of traditional models which are very costly. What we need is innovative and low-cost methods that can be multiplied within the available resources. Among these, the following may be mentioned:

(1) In Maharashtra, the training of primary and pre-school teachers has been integrated. This makes two major reforms possible: (a) The play-way methods of teaching can be introduced in classes I and II where they are badly needed and where they help in reducing wastage; and (b) the primary teachers can run, as part of their duty, children's play-centres attached to primary schools (especially in all cases where the instructional hours are reduced to three or four per day) and thus provide some pre-school education to large numbers of children with only a marginal addition to costs.

(2) The Tamil Nadu experiment of using locally available educated women to run pre-schools reduces the cost per child per year very greatly and deserves adoption everywhere.

(3) Child-care can be an important theme round which adult education of women can be built. This will help in improving the home-background of pre-school children and assist in their socialization on right lines.

(4) Large numbers of women are employed in the organized sector and on several programmes of development undertaken by official and non-official agencies. Arrangements should be made for the care and education of their young children. The excellent work done by the mobile creche movement developed by the late Shrimati Meera Mahadevan is a good model in this regard.

(5) Above all, it must be remembered that any attempt to draw a rigid demarcation between school and pre-school years will come in the way of universalizing elementary education itself. Our primary schools have no pre-schools or creches attached to them. The most common work which girls from poor families are required to do is to look after young children. On the one hand, we are anxious to

promote girls' education and organize a number of programmes to increase their enrolment. On the other, we do not permit girls to bring young children with them and request them to leave them at home before coming to school. Since this is impossible, in practice it means only one thing: the girls are prevented from joining schools and there is a positive disincentive in the system against the spread of education among girls from poor families. Experiments have been tried, notably by the late Shrimati Tarabai Modak, wherein small creches or pre-schools were attached to primary schools and were conducted by girls themselves under the general supervision of the teachers. The additional costs involved in the programme were marginal, but they succeeded very well in enrolling a large number of girls from the poor families. This idea can and should be adopted on a mass scale.

Wanted: A Mass Movement

4.22 Before closing this discussion, we would like to emphasize a point of supreme significance, viz., none of the three programmes of people's education referred to here (adult education, education of out-of-school youth, and universal elementary education) can succeed unless a powerful, nation-wide movement is organized for the purpose and unless a simultaneous effort is made to organize the poor people and to improve their standard of living. This is essentially a package deal and without it we will not be able to meet the requirements implicit in these programmes such as,

- motivating millions of illiterate adults and youth to learn and to acquire literacy;
- changing the motivation of millions of parents and drawing millions of non-attending children into schools and retaining them therein;
- transforming the present orientations of teachers, generally geared to the classes and to the middle class white-collar attitudes and changing their values almost overnight, into work and development-oriented ones geared to the service of the common people;
- training of thousands of non-teachers and enthusing them to participate in the programmes and utilizing all social institutions also for the purpose;

- organizing a big programme of non-formal education outside the school system; and
- taking vigorous steps to transform the existing formal system radically and creating and maintaining a climate of sustained and dedicated hard work, both within and without the school system.

We should also emphasize that even the purely educational tasks, apart from the political and economic tasks of organizing the poor and raising their standards of living, are beyond the capacity of teachers as a profession, beyond the resources of the school system itself, and beyond even the best efforts of the entire bureaucratic machine. These tasks can be performed only through a nation-wide social movement in which all the people are intensely involved. It is the responsibility of all the public leadership, and especially of the political leadership, to organize and sustain such a movement at a high level of tempo over the next ten years or so and the duty of the bureaucracy, the teaching community, and all educated persons to support these efforts.

D. POST-ELEMENTARY EDUCATION : ACCESS, FEES, SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS, AND EXPANSION

4.23 There has been a very rapid and unplanned expansion of secondary and higher education during the past thirty years, not necessarily for good academic or developmental reasons. Some of the demand arises from wrong employment policies wherein a university degree becomes necessary even for jobs where it is irrelevant. A boy often goes to college because he does not get a job when he completes secondary education (which makes higher education a costly unemployment dole) and a girl does so while she is waiting to be married (which converts the college into a 'baby-sitting' establishment). Secondary schools and colleges have become status symbols and are often started for the political and economic advantages they confer on their entrepreneurs, without any attention to proper planning of locations, academic viability, or level of unit costs. There is also a built-in element of expansion within the system itself: pressures from the educated unemployed lead to expansion of secondary schools and colleges which, in their turn, lead to greater unemployment and more intensive pressures. We have also refused to adopt selective admissions and preferred to follow an open-door

policy in practice, if not always in theory. Since the available resources in men and money are limited; we create a dual system at these stages to meet the challenges of expansion. There is a core of prestigious and good quality institutions (i.e., institutions in which education is closely linked to good employment) where admissions are selective (and often highly so) and where students are selected on 'merit' which, in practice, implies their ability to choose their parents carefully! This is surrounded by a large penumbra of poor quality institutions, mostly of general education, wherein the so-called open-door access only guarantees that the child of the common man shall have admission in some institution, however poor, and in some cases, however useless. Ironically enough, this policy of open-door admissions which was supposed to be formulated in the interests of the poor and is strongly defended by them in the name of vertical mobility, mainly benefits the upper and middle classes in practice, and particularly those who live in places where institutions of secondary and higher education are located. Most children from the underprivileged social groups are eliminated, on harsh economic grounds, at the elementary stage itself; mediocre and third-rate children of the upper and middle classes find easy access to the system, especially in urban areas; and even the talented children of the poor, who are a national asset, often remain outside the system. The direct and indirect subsidies given at these stages mostly go to the upper and middle classes; and the system tends to reproduce an exploiting and parasitic class rather than individuals who will serve the common people. It is these inequalities, inadequacies and weaknesses of the system that we must strive to eliminate or reduce.

4.24 General Policy. In the present situation when we are not able to provide even elementary education, post-elementary education cannot be claimed as a matter of right. The policy with regard to its provision should, therefore, be governed by the following principles:

- (1) Expansion of facilities in post-elementary education should be closely related to the resources available and the maintenance of proper standards.
- (2) A distinction should be made between an individual's right to life-long learning and the payment of a subsidy from the public treasury for the post-elementary education of an individual. The former is a fundamental human right and no State should have the authority to tell an individual to study thus far and no further. But

- the State subsidies for post-elementary education should be available, in view of the financial constraints, only to the deserving and economically handicapped persons.
- (3) In view of the high priority given to adult and universal elementary education, the resources available for all post-elementary education would be comparatively limited. These should, therefore, be used with the greatest economy and effectiveness, especially in programmes which serve the common people (such as the identification and cultivation of talent from among the poor people) and in qualitative improvement (which is urgent and hitherto neglected).
 - (4) The bulk of subsidies now provided in post-elementary education, which mostly go to upper and middle classes should be reduced progressively while those meant for the underprivileged groups should be increased.
 - (5) Even while it is necessary to regulate the over-all enrolments in post-elementary education on grounds of the large and rapidly increasing numbers of the educated unemployed, the access of the underprivileged groups to post-elementary education should be increased so that the new policy of regulated enrolments may result only in limiting the access of the upper and middle classes to secondary and higher education to reasonable proportions.

4.25 Access. In order to increase the access of the underprivileged social groups to secondary and higher education, it is suggested that the type of assistance, which is now provided to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students at these stages, should be extended to all children and youth from families with an income below a prescribed level, irrespective of caste, religion, or sex. In particular, the following measures are called for:

(1) In all institutions at this level where, for various reasons, admissions are selective, steps should be taken to reserve an adequate proportion of the total seats for the economically handicapped students selected on the basis of merit.

(2) All children and youth from economically handicapped families who are admitted should receive free education, in both formal and non-formal streams. They should be given individual attention and guidance (and other relevant facilities) which will enable them to adjust themselves to these institutions and get the largest possible benefit from them.

(3) The talented children from the poor families get a very raw deal

in the present system. Many of them go unnoticed because they do not either enter schools or drop out early. They have access mainly to poor schools which is a great handicap. The culture-loaded selection tests are all against them and they receive little of the personal guidance or tuition they need to overcome their social handicaps. What is even worse, they are often unable to continue their studies because the opportunity costs are very high for them. Well-planned and large-scale efforts are needed to ensure that this talent, which is our precious national asset, is discovered and cultivated. At the elementary stage itself, there must be a sustained nation-wide drive to discover talent and selected children should be enabled to continue their education at the secondary level, through such assistance, including scholarships and placement, as may be necessary in each case. A similar programme should be mounted at the secondary stage as well. The selection tests will have to be specially devised to ensure that the talented children of the poor are not a handicap, and they should be provided with the needed personal guidance and tuition. In fact, it should be an article of faith in the new educational policy that all talented children of the poor families shall be deemed to be the wards of the State and shall be enabled to receive the highest education they desire and are capable of.

4.26 We would like to make it clear that we do not propose any reduction in the existing programmes of promoting the education of scheduled castes and tribes. These in fact have to be expanded considerably. All that we desire is an additional step, the extension of similar facilities to all economically handicapped students, irrespective of caste, religion, or sex, on the lines indicated above.

4.27 Fees. Secondary and particularly university education are highly subsidized at present because the fees have remained low while the costs have been continually rising. As the subsidy involved in this process goes mostly to the upper and middle classes, they strongly resist the raising of fees. In fact, they exert a continuous pressure for reduction or abolition of fees. There is no justification to continue this inequity; and once free education is assured to the poor, early steps should be taken to increase the fees, in both secondary and university education, and those who can should be required to pay for them in proportion to their ability. This a hard political decision; but there is no escape from it, partly to earn additional resources, partly to keep down pressures on the expansion of full-time institutions, and partly on grounds of social justice. Raising of fees to a realistic level should

also make students and parents take a serious view of the frequent closure of schools, colleges, and universities.

4.28 The problem of high fee charging and financially independent institutions like public schools or some English medium schools is relevant in this context. It is true that there should be no objection, on financial grounds, to the establishment of private or public educational institutions at the secondary and university stages where the fees charged cover all the costs. But there would be serious objection to them on educational and social grounds because access to such institutions would ordinarily be restricted only to the rich and well-to-do who can afford to pay the high fees charged and thus lead to social segregation. The best course would, therefore, be to abolish such institutions. But if this is not immediately possible, the minimum essential reform to be adopted, as a transitional measure, is to obligate these institutions to admit at least fifty per cent students, selected on the basis of merit, from the economically and socially handicapped families, and subsidize such students partially to the extent of the cost per child in similar institutions maintained by the government. This may involve a further increase in their fees which are already high. But the step is fully justified on grounds of equity.

4.29 Selective Admissions. Should admissions to secondary and university education be selective? The proposal has been stoutly opposed in all quarters and has remained practically unimplemented so far. The principal arguments put forward in its support are three: reduction of educated unemployment; raising of standards; and economy in the use of scarce resources. On the other hand, there are strong pressures for the maintenance of the present policy of open-door access, not only from the upper and middle classes who are the principal beneficiaries of the system, but also from the weaker sections of the society who fear that their chances of vertical mobility through higher education will be considerably reduced if it becomes selective. There is, therefore, no neat and tidy solution to this complex problem and we may have to adopt a pragmatic policy on the following lines:

(1) There should be no selection at the beginning of secondary education (class VIII or IX) because the children are too young.

(2) In all full-time institutions at the post-matriculation stage which receive aid from state funds, proper standards should be maintained and the total number of students to be admitted should be prescribed on the academic basis of facilities available; and selection should be

resorted to if the number of applicants exceeds the seats available. In order that this should not adversely affect the interests of the weaker sections, it is necessary to design better and more just methods of selection, and also to reserve adequate seats for all the underprivileged groups.

(3) All non-formal secondary and higher education should receive encouragement and continue the present policy of open-door access. From this point of view, all public examinations at the secondary and university stages should be open to private candidates who have studied on their own. The facilities for correspondence courses (including library and contact programmes) should also be adequately provided in all the linguistic regions.

These policies will ensure that expansion of facilities in post-elementary education will not be at the cost of quality (which is what often happens at present), that non-formal post-elementary education (which can be self-supporting) shall be available to all who desire it and qualify for it, and that selective admissions, which shall be introduced only in state-supported full-time institutions (where every student admitted receives a subsidy from the public exchequer), will not adversely affect the access of the weaker sections of society to post-matriculation education (because of better selection tests and adequate reservation of seats). The programme will succeed better if there are adequate job opportunities for those who are not selected or who do not propose to go in for further education, if the formal and non-formal channels of education are treated as equal in status for purposes of employment, and if due concession are allowed (i.e., in age of recruitment) to ensure that those who adopt a method of recurrent education (i.e., transferring themselves from school to work and vice-versa according to needs) are at least not at a disadvantage in comparison with those who complete their education at one stretch.

4.30 Expansion. As most of the evils in post-elementary education (e.g., dilution of standards, over-expansion, escalation in unit costs and waste of resources) arise from the indiscriminate establishment of new institutions and starting of new courses or increasing the number of students admitted in all sorts of institutions without any regard to academic or economic considerations, perhaps the one major step to regulate the expansion of secondary and higher education is to control the establishment and location of new secondary schools, colleges and universities and the starting of new courses or in increasing the intake in existing institutions. Our policy

in this respect should, therefore, be based on the following principles:

(1) The improvement of standards in existing institutions should have priority over starting of new institutions.

(2) No new institutions should be started unless adequate resources are available in terms of men, materials and money.

(3) New secondary schools and colleges should be started only in those backward places where the existing facilities are inadequate or where the need for such institutions is clearly justified. New universities should be established only if their need is established on strong academic grounds.

(4) As pressures for the establishment of these institutions often come from private enterprise, it will be helpful to prescribe rigorous conditions for their recognition or affiliation and to insist on compliance with them.

(5) Every effort has to be made to ensure that all secondary schools and colleges have at least a minimum enrolment which makes them viable and economic. The restraint in establishing new institutions, proper planning of their locations, and the rationalization, where possible, of the existing institutions themselves, will assist this programme by increasing enrolments in existing institutions.

(6) No new courses should be started in any institution unless a minimum enrolment is assured. Similarly, the provision of existing courses should be rationalized, wherever possible, and courses which have become outdated or have a low demand should be discontinued. Programmes of sharing of facilities and cooperative teaching will also be of great help in reducing costs and increasing efficiency.

(7) No institution should be allowed to admit students in excess of those for whom reasonable facilities exist.

4.31 Before closing this discussion, we must refer to two major problems that have a strong influence on expansion of higher education, viz., (a) the close and long-standing nexus between a degree and a place in the privileged group or a job in the organized sector, especially under government, and (b) the wage-structure we have adopted for educated persons.

(1) The practice of appointing educated persons to jobs under government began more than a hundred and thirty years ago as a method of encouraging people to go in for the new system of education that had been established by the colonial administration. It worked well till about 1921 because the expansion of jobs under government (or in the tertiary sector for which secondary and

university education generally prepared their students) could still keep pace with the output of the educational system. But since then, the undesirable consequences of this nexus have come to the fore. To begin with, it over-emphasizes the bread-and-butter objective of secondary and higher education and makes them a ladder which enables the ambitious to climb into privilege, even as it devalues their academic objective, viz., the production of individuals dedicated to the pursuit of scholarship and excellence. Moreover, the hunt for a place in the privileged sector or a well-paid and secure job in the organized sector creates immense pressures for the expansion of secondary and higher education because they grow more in proportion to the large numbers of aspirants for jobs rather than in relation to the small number of jobs available. This necessarily leads to an over-production of secondary school and college graduates and to large-scale educated unemployment. Instead of dealing with this problem by regulating the output of the educational system, we try to meet the situation by several devious methods such as the appointment of educated persons as teachers within the education system itself (which only increases the size of the system still further and compounds the difficulties), creation of jobs in the organized public sector even in excess of needs (which is really equivalent to disguised under-employment and leads to indiscipline and waste of resources), and upgrading of qualifications required for the posts without any justification or by appointing persons over-qualified for the jobs (which only leads to a devaluation of education). But none of these methods have helped; and what is worse, they have merely increased the pressures for the expansion of higher education still further, sapped the motivation of the students, created unrest and indiscipline on the campuses and lowered the standards even more extensively. A stage has now been reached when a university degree has become almost the minimum educational qualification for any worthwhile job and, at the same time, the distance between a degree and a job has increased so greatly that the process of hunting for a job through higher education has become almost tantamount to a draw in a lottery.

(2) In the same way, the unrealistic and arbitrary wage-structure which we have created and which is far beyond our economic capacity, has led to yet another set of problems and contradictions. On the one hand, it increases the unit cost of education so that further expansion of education becomes more difficult; and on the other hand, it increases the demand for expansion of education by making each

job more covetable. Similarly, it decreases the number of jobs we can create by increasing the investment needed per job while it simultaneously increases the number of claimants for the job through an enlarged output of the system. What is even worse, it disturbs the value structure in the academic world itself. An educated person should be an individual who values our tradition of plain living and high thinking and who is close to the people and dedicated to their service. The artificial wage-structure we have evolved for educated persons makes them courtiers rather than seers, increases the distance between them and the people, and converts them from servants into exploiters of the masses. It is, therefore, necessary, not only to break this link between higher education and jobs in the privileged sector, but to transform the present wage-structure itself on egalitarian lines.

If these basic problems have to be tackled satisfactorily, the following are some of the more important measures that can be taken:

(1) The arbitrary, uneconomic and inequalitarian wage-structure should be abandoned, in both the public and private sectors. A new egalitarian national policy on wages-incomes-prices should be enunciated and enforced in a phased programme spread over not more than ten years.

(2) The qualifications prescribed for jobs in the public sector should be reviewed and the present policy of recruiting over-qualified persons should be abandoned. In fact, it will be found that, for most jobs a pass at the 10+ stage (or 10 + 2 stage) would be enough. Therefore, persons with higher educational qualifications should either be disqualified for these jobs or the age of recruitment to them should be so fixed that graduates would not ordinarily be able to compete. The private sector also could be persuaded to adopt similar policies.

(3) The present system of giving preference to those who have studied in full-time institutions should be abandoned; and in recruitment, persons trained through private study or part-time education should receive at least equal consideration, if not some preference.

(4) Wherever possible, the present practice of selecting persons on the basis of formal education only should be abandoned; and recruitment may be made through special tests which are job-specific and open also to persons who have been trained through non-formal and incidental channels as well. The possession of a degree should not be obligatory for appearing for these tests; and the Union Public Service Commission may give a lead by not requiring a degree for all

the competitive examinations it holds, including the IAS and other services.

(5) The tendency to over-professionalize (which in turn over-emphasizes higher education) should be curbed; and work and services should be so organized that more and more tasks are done at the middle or lower levels by para-professionals or even non-professionals.

E. SECONDARY EDUCATION : IMPROVEMENT OF STANDARDS AND VOCATIONALIZATION

4.32 Improvement of Standards. Improvement of standards in secondary education is crucial to the entire educational system because this stage provides the teachers for the elementary schools and students for the colleges and universities. Emphasis should, therefore, be placed on the improvement of standards in secondary education rather than on expansion. This will involve raising the enrolments in every secondary school to an optimum level where it becomes academically viable and economic, a substantial upgrading of facilities in terms of land, buildings and equipment (these are sub-standard in a large majority of institutions at present), and faculty improvement. This will need a substantial investment of funds, a part of which could be raised from the community.

4.33 A thorough reform of the content of secondary education is called for and will be the most significant programme for this purpose. As at the elementary stage, work-experience and social service should become an integral part of secondary education. A diversification and upgrading of the curriculum is necessary on the broad lines recommended by the Education Commission. Unfortunately, several controversies have been raging at present over different aspects of this programme.

(1) The Education Commission recommended that the teaching of science and mathematics should be improved and made compulsory at this stage. This is being objected to on the ground that it affects the education of girls and the backward classes who are comparatively weak in these subjects. The recommendation is, however, basically sound and inescapable in the modern world. We also do not believe that there is any scientific basis to the argument that girls or backward classes are adversely affected by this recommendation. At the most, they would need some special assistance in the transitional phase. This

should be provided.

(2) Some advocate the deepening of the content of secondary education to improve standards and to keep pace with the growing knowledge in the world. Others condemn this effort on the ground that it overloads the children with inert information and tries to convert them into bearers of book-loads or little memory machines. We believe that deepening of content is essential and inescapable. But this can and should be achieved through better methods of teaching and evaluation rather than through a mere overloading of the curriculum as we have been doing so far. Probably some rationalization and simplification is needed at the lower secondary level. However, at the higher secondary stage, consideration for standards should predominate. Any attempt to reduce the content at this level to bring it within the reach of every aspirant would be fatal. Instead, we should select only those who have the competence to receive education at this level where the first steps towards specialization are taken.

(3) The problem of nature of content of the lower secondary stage (classes IX-X or VIII-X) has not yet been resolved. The Secondary Education Commission (1952) recommended definite streaming and the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended an undiversified course, but without a compulsory pass in any subject, the eligibility to further education depending upon the achievement of each student. The latter is definitely a progressive measure and we should gradually move in the direction thus indicated.

(4) Controversies have been raised about the extent to which curricula at the secondary stage should be uniform over all parts of the country. An absolute uniformity is neither possible nor desirable. But it is essential to evolve, through discussion and mutual negotiation between the States, a few broad guidelines regarding (a) avoidance of matters which would impair or harm national integration, and (b) the achievement of broadly comparably standards at the public examinations at the end of class X and class XII which should be regarded as equivalent on a national basis. In this, the Ministry of Education and the NCERT have a significant role to play.

The principal difficulties in resolving the conflicting views is the unrealistic attempt to create a uniform and rigid system in all parts of a vast and plural country like that of ours. As recommended earlier, we should give up this attempt and strive to create a varied, elastic and dynamic system of secondary education which can be best adjusted to local conditions and needs. The idea of creating 'experimental schools'

which can, under certain terms and conditions, be allowed to frame their own curricula, should also be adopted and promoted vigorously.

4.34 Vocationalization. We have been talking of vocationalization of secondary education for nearly one hundred years; and in spite of all the experiments tried so far, the enrolment in vocational courses at the secondary stage barely exceeds ten per cent of the total. It will be readily agreed that this situation is far from happy and that we should move in a new direction so that the bulk of the students in secondary schools could be prepared to enter the world of work rather than a college or university. This is necessary even in the present situation where only 25 children out of 100 complete the elementary course; and obviously, it will be even more essential when all the 100 children will complete the elementary course. The basic issues therefore are: who will go in for these vocational courses at the secondary stage and why? What type of vocational courses shall be provided at the secondary stage and how? It is to these difficult problems that we have not been able to find satisfactory solutions.

4.35 Let us begin at the end of the elementary stage and ask ourselves: who will go in for secondary education when everyone completes elementary education and the age of marriage is raised to 18 for girls and 21 for boys? Some may think that the studies at the secondary level are too difficult and may decide to step off. Others may find the opportunity costs of secondary education to be too high and may decide to leave. This situation should be accepted with one reservation, viz., talented children who cannot proceed further due to economic reasons should be assisted to continue their education. Even among those who decide to continue their studies, some may decide not to enter upon a regular secondary course, but to take vocational courses of various durations and to prepare themselves for specific careers. There should, therefore, be adequate provision for such courses which form the first stage of vocationalization. This aspect has not received adequate attention so far and needs emphasis in the years ahead.

4.36 A more serious attempt at vocational education will have to be made at higher secondary stage where a much larger proportion of students may decide to go in, not for the university preparatory courses, but for the vocational courses which would prepare them for various kinds of employment opportunities, including self-employment. There are already a number of courses which begin at this level and prepare for various jobs in the organized sector

(polytechnics, most courses in ITI, teacher-training programmes, agricultural or forestry schools, correspondence, type writing, shorthand, and other secretarial courses, etc.). But obviously the scope of these could be enlarged, especially if we include programmes of self-employment or entrepreneurship, in various fields such as health, agriculture, industry, or management. Considerable work is needed for the designing of these courses on the basis of careful studies of local situations regarding employment opportunities available in the immediate future. The vocational courses may be terminal in the sense that students will step off the educational ladder at these points and enter the world of work. But there should be adequate opportunity and provision for these students to rejoin the educational stream, if and when necessary, and to get vertical mobility. The lack of popularity of these courses at present is also another problem to faced. But let it be emphasized that the extent to which students will opt for these courses will depend upon the development of the economy, the choice of technology the availability of jobs, the narrowing down of the wage-structure between different levels of workers and especially as between the blue and white collar categories, the extent to which we can assure these students opportunities for further education and vertical mobility, the extent to which admissions to the academic course preparatory to the university become selective, and the discontinuance of the present practice of recruiting highly educated persons for middle-level jobs. What is said here will also apply to some vocational courses of a higher type which can be provided after the higher secondary stage. These will form the third level of vocational courses.

4.37 At present, most of our vocational courses are school-based and a large proportion of students who join them do so on an experimental basis before they have definitely decided upon a career or have been selected for a specific job. We should like to emphasize that this process, while essential in some cases, is wasteful and less efficient. Wherever possible, we should try to provide post-decision (i.e., after the young person definitely decides upon a career for himself) or postselection (i.e., after a person has been definitely selected for a job) vocational courses. In all such cases, there is good motivation and an optimum utilization of available scarce resources. Secondly, there should be a considerable increase in industry-based vocational courses so that vocations are 'educationalized' instead of vocationalizing education. Such a programme may even be made

obligatory on industries and certain grant-in-aid made available to them for the purpose if necessary. Thirdly, there should be an adequate provision for sandwich courses and for regular apprenticeship training.

F. HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

4.38 Strengths and Weaknesses. Higher education in India presents a saga of a few achievements and many failures. Its main contribution is that it has helped to create a large stock of high level trained manpower (some of which is extremely competent) and to build a good indigenous capability in research. We have also some creditable achievements in science and technology and in agricultural, engineering, and medical education which has helped us to develop a modern industrial sector, to promote agricultural development through the introduction of modern technology, and to build up a network of high quality modern health services. We have also been able to expand the university base and to establish some centres of advanced study in the universities as well as a few high quality institutions of teaching and research outside the university system. But its failures are even greater. The vast bulk of the institutions, mostly affiliated colleges of general education, maintain poor standards and many of them are too small to be academically viable or financially economic. The enrolments have increased inordinately; and, as the economy has not grown in proportion, higher education converts, on a large scale, the uneducated underemployment or unemployment (which is mute, unorganized, and without a nuisance value) into educated, urban unemployment (which is vocal and organized and has a great nuisance value). As stated earlier, this also saps student motivation, creates unrest on the campus, and leads to further deterioration of standards. The courses provided are often irrelevant and undemanding and not sufficiently modernized and diversified; the method of teaching over-emphasize lectures and the examinations continue to be external and traditional. The teaching and learning materials leave a good deal to be desired and the continued use of English (over which an increasing number of students has only a limited command) as medium of instruction creates difficult problems in teaching, learning or communication and lowers the standards still further, besides creating a wall between the intelligentsia and the people.

4.39 The Continuing Crisis. Perhaps the worst aspect of the problem is the continuous crisis situation in higher education. Over the past fifteen years or so, the university system in India is passing from cirsis to crisis arising out of rapid and unplanned expansion, inadequate finances, lowering of standards, agitations by teachers, students and *karamcharis* which paralyse university life, official and political interference, and weakness of administration (bordering virtually on collapse in some areas) which fails to rise up to the challenges of the situation and is too paralyzed to act on sound academic principles by the atmosphere of violence created on the campus by political vested interests, an ill-disciplined minority among students and anti-social elements. The emergency created a temporary peace in this situation. But that can hardly be called a solution and a tremendous price had to be paid for it in terms of the loss of academic freedom. With the withdrawal of emergency, all the old familiar scenes of unrest, violence, and crisis are again being re-enacted on the campus, especially as the basic causes of the situation still continue to operate. Very naturally people feel more concerned about the dysfunctioning of higher education than of any other stage of our educational system; and this is, therefore, the one area in which determined action is called for on a priority basis.

4.40 Desperate situations call for desperate remedies; and some heroic measures are often suggested to improve the situation.

(1) The first is the recommendation of the C.D. Deshmukh Committee that a compulsory national service of one year should be obligatory on a student, who has completed the secondary school, before he is admitted to the college. This is a good programme on its own merits. But its contribution to the resolution of the present crisis situation in higher education is at best doubtful. The programme also involves a very high financial investment which we may not be able to afford and requires an immense organizational effort which we may not be able to mount up. On the other hand, both the financial and organizational issues will become much easier if the national service programme is integrated with the undergraduate course.

(2) The second is the proposal that all colleges and universities should be closed for a year and the students and teachers involved in programmes of national and social service in general and in transforming the educational system in particular. The organizational implications of this programme are even more formidable than those of the Deshmukh proposal. It may also be emphasized that the plan

will be effective only if it is well implemented and if we are in a position to utilize the services of teachers and students in meaningful and challenging programmes; and it will be equally unproductive or even counter-productive if this cannot be done.

All things considered, one sees no short-cuts to a radical transformation of the system which will have to be attempted through a well-planned, sustained and vigorous programme in spite of all the difficulties involved.

4.41 The Hard Decisions. It was pointed out earlier that the organization of a mass movement is absolutely essential if programmes of adult and elementary education have to succeed. In secondary and higher education, the position is different: no significant improvement is possible at these stages unless some hard decisions are taken, both by politicians and academics.

(1) Some of the hard political decisions to be made will include,

- regulation of the over-all expansion of higher education, the introduction of the system of double pricing under which the poor will get free education and others will have to pay higher fees according to their ability, and reduction of subsidies, both direct and indirect, which go to the rich and well-to-do side by side with an increase in those which go to the poor;
- introduction of selective admissions with the necessary safeguards for the weaker sections;
- adoption of measures which will eventually delink jobs from degrees;
- maintenance of discipline; and
- protection of university autonomy and full political support without political interference.

(2) The implementation of a national language policy. This is an example of a decision which is both political and academic and where politicians and academics will have to collaborate meaningfully.

(3) There are also several decisions which the academic community (which includes both teachers and students) itself is responsible to make and implement. These include,

- exercise of academic freedom with courage to function as a critic of society;
- earning and continually deserving autonomy through the rectitude and quality of administration, level of academic performance and

- the extent of services to the local community and the nation;
- sharing and passing down the autonomy from the universities to their departments and affiliated colleges which, in turn, should share it with teachers and students;
- involving students intimately in the entire life of the university;
- making radical changes in the content of education and in the methods of teaching and evaluation; and
- creating a climate of sustained and dedicated hard work in the system as a whole.

It is unfortunate that most of the decisions in these matters are not being made, and the different groups seem to be acting at cross-purposes with one another. No solution of the complex and difficult problems facing secondary and university education can come this way. Progress will be possible only if all the agencies involved – the Centre, the State, the teachers, the students, and the public at large – play their assigned roles with a sense of commitment and responsibility.

4.42 The Undergraduate Stage. With these introductory observations, we shall highlight a few salient aspects of the reform of higher education which need attention.

(1) The undergraduate stage is extremely important and it is rather unfortunate that it is being neglected at present. It should receive attention on a priority basis. The best teachers available should teach at this stage and strive to improve its standards. Good teachers at the undergraduate stage should have the same status as good researchers.

(2) Teaching at the undergraduate stage is mainly a responsibility of the affiliated colleges. The UGC programmes for the development of affiliated colleges should, therefore, continue and be expanded. But the problem will not be solved unless the Stage grant-in-aid systems (which provide the bulk of the finances for the colleges) are radically reformed. What we need is a special machinery at the State level to administer grants-in-aid to colleges and to use the grant-in-aid system as a lever to improve standards.

(3) It is rather unfortunate that the existing undergraduate curricula adopt an almost exclusively academic approach to various disciplines and ignore the important role a curriculum can play in building the attitudes of students towards the problems of social change and national development. They need to be restructured to meet the diversity of student needs and the over-riding objective of creating a

new social order. From this point of view, it is absolutely essential that every undergraduate student should undergo four types of course programmes: (1) a set of *foundation courses* which will expose the student to such areas as history of freedom struggle in India and other parts of the world, concepts and processes of development, the problems and challenges facing the nation and approaches to their tentative solutions, role of science and technology in development, Gandhian thought and alternatives in development; (2) a set of *core courses* which will give the student an opportunity of acquiring a broad familiarity with some chosen disciplines including a depth-study of one or more of them; (3) some *applied studies/projects/field activity* which will form an integral part of his course programme and will be carried out in the final year; and (4) involvement in a programme of *national or social service* for the first two years. A judicious mix of these components will obviously provide a more rounded and richer education to the students; and it will greatly help in changing the wrong attitudes which are now developed among the alumni of colleges and universities and orient them to the service of the people.

(4) These curricular reforms will succeed and yield the best results if steps are taken side by side to re-orient and improve the faculty in affiliated colleges. An intensive and sustained programme is needed for the purpose.

(5) The methods of teaching and evaluation will have to be radically changed, the lecture method which now dominates the scene almost exclusively should be considered as only one of the methods of teaching/learning and the bulk of the learning should be either self-learning by the students or dialogic learning through seminars and discussions. Introduction to research or a discovery approach and team-work should also be promoted.

4.43 Post-graduate Studies and Research. Quality assumes the highest significance at the post-graduate stage. In a way, the quality of the entire educational system and of most social institutions depends upon the standards maintained at this stage which supplies teachers to the university system itself (and through it to the secondary and elementary schools) and which also provides the senior leadership in many important walks of life. Post-graduate studies should, therefore, be developed only in research institutions, university departments, post-graduate university centres, and selected colleges which can provide the necessary facilities. Research needs to be encouraged more widely, both on the theoretical and applied fronts, the former

being essential to develop self-reliance and a meaningful understanding of the natural and social phenomena in depth without which even applied research is neither possible nor worth while, and the latter for policy formulation and solution of day-to-day problems. There has also to be a close coordination between universities and research institutions which should function as a part of an integrated system of post-graduate teaching and research. In the past, there has been a wrong concept of the roles and relationships of the universities and research institutions, the former placing an almost exclusive emphasis on teaching and the latter on research. This has led to the creation of substantial concentration of scientists, engineers, and research facilities in institutions which can make only a limited contribution to the educational system and to the training of young scientists. On the other hand, the universities, barring a few exceptions, have lacked the resources to develop their research programmes which also adversely affects the quality of teaching they provide or the problem-solving abilities of the specialists they train. This mismatch between education, research, and development should be done away with and close linkages should be built up between the universities, research institutions, industry, policy-makers, and the public. This will improve, not only the quality of research produced, but also accelerate its more effective utilization.

4.44 Diversification. A basic reform needed is to diversify the models of institutional structures and their relationships. We began by adopting the classical model of university education, an ivory tower institution of well-motivated students and competent teachers, pursuing the study of Western science and literature through the medium of the English language. This model has long outlived its utility. It has also ceased to represent the reality with the large increases in enrolments, sapping of motivation in a very large proportion of students, and employment of underqualified and ill-motivated teachers. Even its ‘ivory-tower’ character is partly gone because, while it continues to make little contribution to the community around, it is, in its turn, severely rocked by social tensions and turmoils. While some institutions of this classical model (without the over-emphasis on Western knowledge and use of English as a medium) will always be needed, it cannot be the only model to dominate the entire spectrum of higher education. As enrolments increase and the student community gets larger and diversified, it is essential to diversify the institutional models of higher education, and

to create new patterns to suit the emerging needs. In fact, we should move in a direction where institutions of higher education will represent a very wide spectrum of which the classical type is only one, although an important illustration.

4.45 At present, the universities concentrate only on teaching and research which they regard as their legitimate responsibilities. It is, however, essential that every university should also develop extension as its third important responsibility and give it the same status as teaching and research. Extension must also become an important responsibility of colleges and should be integrated with their syllabi.

4.46 It is also necessary to introduce diversified courses, especially those covering newly emergent and inter-disciplinary areas. There should be a much greater freedom to a student to choose from a large variety of courses to suit his interests. This will be facilitated by the adoption of the semester system.

4.47 Decentralization and Autonomy. To improve standards, we must move away from the existing system of centralization of academic authority and external examinations. The system is not defensible even in theory; and in practice, it creates very dialatory procedures, diffuses accountability, gives the deciding voice to the no-changer mediocrity, and provides an umbrella for a good deal of inefficiency or even corruption. It also creates several alibis, real or imaginary, which enable the wrong type of teachers and institutions to evade full responsibility for their actions, just as it deprives the good teachers and institutions the freedom to take initiative for creative, imaginative, and more fruitful action. It is, therefore, absolutely essential to decentralize authority and confer autonomy, from the university administration to the university departments and from the universities to the colleges. The existing bureaucratic and centralized structures of the universities have to be radically altered to avoid delays, to get rid of the obsession with rigid uniformities, to create an elastic and dynamic system, and to promote innovative initiatives and reforms.

4.48 The concept of autonomous colleges is of special significance in this context and implies that the college and its teachers assume full responsibility and accountability for the academic programmes they provide, for the content and quality of their teaching, and for the admission and assessment of the students. Unless this basic condition is first met, it will not be possible to tackle the problem of ‘relevance’ satisfactorily or to diversify curricula and relate them to local needs

and conditions, and what is even more important, to the needs of individual students. Autonomy alone will make it possible for institutions of higher education to become communities of teachers and students engaged in an agreed and mutually satisfactory process of joint pursuit of truth and excellence. It is hoped that the UGC and the universities will grant autonomy to an increasing number of colleges and that we shall gradually move in the direction where autonomy becomes, not a reward for excellence, but the minimum condition for survival.

G. A NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

4.49 A discussion of standards in higher education cannot ignore the problem of the medium of instruction, the language policy to be adopted by the country, and the development of Indian languages. The British administrators adopted English as the medium of instruction at the secondary and university stages; and in spite of its deleterious educational results, the policy at least worked in the larger social context because the British also made English the language of administration, courts, top levels of industry and commerce, and the national press. It took us nearly a quarter of a century (between 1921 and 1947) to change the medium of instruction at the secondary stage from English to regional language/mother-tongue, first giving the students the option to write answers in their own language, then changing and medium of instruction in social sciences, and finally in the natural sciences and technical subjects, never really knowing, whether in this process the text-books come first or the teaching comes first. In the post-independence period, the same 'muddling through' approach has been adopted at the undergraduate stage and, at the present rate of progress, it may take another 20-30 years for the regional languages/mother-tongues to be the media of instruction at this stage. The time taken is longer because the intellectual effort involved is much larger. What is even more unfortunate, the language in top levels of business, commerce and industry, in senior courts, in the national press, and at all higher levels of government continues to be English which consequently still retains its pre-eminent position as language for good employment. This makes the tradition in the medium of instruction at the university stage very difficult and slow. Yet another complication is the fact that realizing the value of English as the language for good employment, the rich and the well-to-do are

switching on to the use of English medium right from the pre-primary stage so that the number of schools using English as medium of instruction has increased fantastically in all urban areas in the past thirty years and the craze is now spreading to rural areas as well. The educational institutions using the regional languages (or mother-tongue) as media are thus becoming second-rate, meant for 'other people's children'. The social segregation on the linguistic basis is, therefore, tending to increase, rather than decrease, and creating greater alienation between the people and those who are going to occupy leadership positions in all walks of life.

4.50 A language policy in the interest of the people will, therefore, have to be firmly laid down and implemented in a sustained and vigorous fashion. The main aspects of such a policy are:

(1) All elementary education should be given in the mother-tongue of the child, except where the mother-tongue is a dialect or language without a script. In such cases, the education of the child should use the dialect or language concerned as medium till a smooth changeover can be made to the regional language.

(2) At the secondary stage, the three-language formula should be adopted. In the non-Hindi areas, the formula is obvious: mother-tongue, English, and Hindi. In the Hindi areas, the official policy is that it should be mother-tongue, English, and an Indian language other than Hindi (preferably one from the South). The policy also allows considerable latitude regarding the time to be allowed for the study of each language, or the standards to be attained. There is hardly any viable alternative to this and it will have to be implemented in spite of all the difficulties involved. In this, the responsibility of the Hindi areas is greater.

(3) At the undergraduate stage, the process of transition from English to regional language is already well under way. It must be expedited. From this point of view, immense effort is needed to produce the necessary text-books and other learning and teaching materials so that the standards improve. The academic community must rise to this challenge.

(4) At the post-graduate and research stage where the process is mostly of self-learning, there is not much point about a medium of instruction. But education of this level has no meaning if the student does not have a direct access to the growing knowledge in the world in his own field.

(5) Every effort must be made to develop the Indian languages

which are the languages of the people and the nation. This programme should have very high priority on State and Central funds for education.

(6) At the national level, Hindi has already been accepted as the official language of the Federal Government and the link language for the country. Considerable progress has also been made in its adoption and use. But a prolonged period of bilingualism is inevitable. The official view that Hindi will not be imposed on any group or State is absolutely correct. An understanding and patient approach is called for, especially on the part of those whose mother-tongue is Hindi.

(7) English can never have the absolute and sovereign place which it once had in our midst. But it will continue to have a very important place as an international language which provides an access to the growing knowledge in the world. It is, therefore, necessary to redefine the position of English in our society and education. In the past, English has been used to build up social status and economic privileges for a few; and in education, it has generally played a negative role of preventing the bulk of the people from receiving good secondary and higher education. In the future, these roles will have to be totally changed. English will have to be delinked from status and privileges; and it will have to play an enabling role of providing an individual access to world knowledge. This is a service function where the emphasis will be on enabling an individual to acquire as much of English as he needs at any time in his life and *not* on discriminating in favour of those who know English and against those who do not.

(8) It is also necessary to point out that the adoption of regional languages as media of instruction increases rather than decreases the need to study English.

(9) Several changes are needed in the present policies regarding the teaching of English in the school system and outside. By and large, no English need be taught at the primary stage. But English should be taught in middle and secondary schools. A pass in English should not, however, be obligatory for a successful completion of secondary education. For admissions to the first degree, a pass in a language test in English should be obligatory. But a student should have the option to pass it before the end of his first year and adequate arrangements for specialized intensive courses in English (to enable a student to prepare for the test) should be made in every college. At the post-graduate stage also, a student should be expected to have a good working knowledge of English and even of another foreign language,

depending upon the field of his study. In addition, there should be adequate arrangements for teaching English through non-formal channels and for adults. The essence of the new programme thus will be to provide adequate facilities to learn English to each group of students or individuals according to their needs at every stage of education and even outside the educational system.

(10) Full encouragement should be given to the study of foreign languages other than English and adequate facilities should be provided for their study.

4.51 One point must be emphasized. The language problem is extremely explosive. It must, therefore, be approached cautiously and played down. It is only with patient and silent but steady and continuous work within the educational system itself combined with appropriate administrative action (such as to hold all competitive and selection examinations in regional languages) that we will be able to solve this national problem which is often complicated and vitiated by short-sighted and hasty political actions.

H. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

4.52 The implementation of the major programmes of educational reconstruction discussed above will involve corresponding changes in educational administration and a new approach to educational finance.

4.53 *Leadership.* Who will provide the leadership to these programmes of educational transformation? No one doubts that a dynamic leadership is essential for success. But concepts and visions of the leadership needed show great variations.

4.54 Can this leadership arise within the educational system itself?

(1) The traditional view assumes that the leadership will come from the educational bureaucracy: the Education Secretaries, the Directors of Education, the Inspectorate, and the administrators. The proposals made, equally traditional, include the creation of an Indian Education Service and the strengthening of the State Departments of Education which means more officers who would be more highly paid and more qualified, with more and more of in-service training. While one recognizes the useful role of bureaucracies, the limits of this approach are equally obvious. Bureaucracy alone will not be able to plan and implement the radical programmes visualized here.

(2) Another view, which is also traditional, is that the leadership will come from the universities. In this view, a key role is assigned to the university departments of education which, in turn, would work with the training institutions for teachers and strive to promote experimentation, innovation, evaluation and reconstruction. The theoretical and practical contribution of university departments of education and training institutions to educational development, and especially to pedagogy, can be very considerable. From the over-all point of view, however, the university departments of education (which, in India, have mostly concerned themselves with the training of secondary school teachers and teacher educators) and the training colleges for secondary and elementary school teachers have made only a limited contribution so far even to the development of pedagogy. Their contribution to the planning and implementation of radical educational reforms has been even less. These institutions will, therefore, have to change their outlook radically before they can become instruments of change.

(3) A third view looks to the teachers and to their organizations for providing the leadership needed for radical educational reforms. Unfortunately, our past experience indicates that neither the teachers, nor their organizations, have shown adequate commitment to radical educational reforms and have not provided any effective leadership in planning and implementing them. There is an urgent need for introspection in this regard.

(4) Yet another view suggests that the university students may take the leadership in bringing about radical changes in education (and even in society). Here also, the actual experience in the past has been far from encouraging. It is true that students in higher education often espouse and agitate for some educational or social issues. But these generally have a negative impact on standards; and their contribution to radical educational or social changes of the type visualized here is almost negligible. This also is a case for careful introspection.

All things considered, it appears that the dynamic leadership needed to initiate radical reforms may not arise within the educational system which, at present, largely works for conformity with existing patterns and processes within a social *status quo*. At the same time, no educational reforms, radical or otherwise, can be put across without the active collaboration of the educational administrators, universities, teachers and students. Under these circumstances, we will have to intensify our efforts to build up and strengthen a new leadership with-

in the educational system itself so that radical educational reforms are conceived and implemented. This will require an intensive effort to orient the different groups within the educational system itself to the wider social issues and problems and to the close relationships between educational and social transformation. It is widely recognized that there are several competent and committed individuals in all these four groups – administrator, teacher educators, teachers, and students – who can make a good contribution to planning and implementation of radical educational reforms. But unfortunately, their numbers are small and they do not become effective because of the rigidity and uniformity of the educational system which gives a strong veto to the no-changer or the traditional majority. We must, therefore, strive to increase the numbers and proportion of such individuals and help them to become more effective through the creation of a decentralized, elastic and dynamic structure. What is even more important, there must be a close link between these enlightened workers within the educational system and the progressive forces and workers outside the educational system. It is only this joint action that can yield the best results.

4.55 To what extent can the leadership needed to bring about radical educational reforms arise outside the educational system? Since the basic educational issues are essentially political, and since educational and social reform have to be pursued side by side, the leadership for the planning and implementation of these programmes of radical educational reconstruction can best come from the state itself; and the whole programme becomes easier if the state identifies itself with the poor and the under-privileged and commits itself to bring about the complementary and simultaneous social transformation needed. But this ‘political will’ is often absent; and in such an eventuality, the needed leadership can only be provided by the political and social workers who are engaged in the education and organization of the poor and under-privileged social groups. If they start the chain reaction, there would be many kindred and responsive elements, not only within the education sub-system, but in all the social sub-systems as well, which will give support and develop the programme further. The role of political and social workers outside the educational system thus becomes crucial and significant. This is where committed individuals and voluntary organizations have a unique contribution to make.

4.56 In the Indian situation, the state has so far identified itself, by

and large, with the educational demands and interests of the upper and middle classes and its commitments to promote the educational interests of the weaker sections have been comparatively less urgent and powerful. Under these circumstances, the role of political and social workers who are trying to help the people to come into their own and the individuals and groups within the educational system who are committed to radical reforms becomes extremely significant. They can educate public opinion, bring pressure upon the state, and help to create the social, economic, and political conditions which will make the implementation of radical educational reforms possible.

4.57 Administrative Structures and Processes. The existing administrative structures and processes which have been designed for a uniform, rigid, and static (or slowly changing) organization of a centralized character have no place in the new educational system which must be highly decentralized, diversified, elastic, and dynamic to suit the needs of a rapidly changing society in a vast and plural country like that of ours. India became free in 1947. But the Indian teacher is still bound by so many official directives, decisions, and orders in all matters including curricula, text-books, teaching methods, and examinations that he has not yet been able to get the fundamental freedom to teach; and if anything, his bondage has increased and become greater in the past 30 years. Consequently, he has also not been able to give the basic freedom to learn to his students. As can well be imagined, the teaching-learning process thus becomes artificial and loses all its spontaneity and creativity under these conditions where both teachers and students have been enslaved to a system. Perhaps the greatest administrative reform needed at present is to give their freedom to teachers and students and make education a creative and joyous adventure to all concerned.

4.58 From this point of view, it is necessary to emphasize that a highly centralized administrative apparatus is unsuitable for a progressive educational system for the people wherein the people themselves are expected to participate effectively. It is true that education is a national concern and that we must also have a national policy on education. But whether education is in the concurrent list (which will make the coordinating responsibility of the Centre a little easier to implement) or not, it is beyond doubt that the main role of the Central Government is to provide a stimulating but non-coercive leadership and that the effective authority in education should vest in the State Governments. In fact, it is undesirable to concentrate too

much of authority even in the State Governments. We have already indicated that, in higher education, the States must respect the autonomy of the universities which, in turn, must share it with the departments, colleges, teachers, students, and the lay representatives. In so far as school education is concerned, there should be suitable authorities at the district (or block) level and the local community must be associated with its school in an effective way. Care should be taken to see that, in all this process, there is adequate devolution of resources to match the delegation of authority and transfer of responsibility.

4.59 This progressive delegation of authority from New Delhi to the village community should be accompanied by greater freedom to schools and teachers who should have increasing freedom to frame curricula, to assess their students and to innovate and experiment. The concepts of experimental schools and autonomous colleges should be developed on as large a scale as possible. In short, the objective of all administrative reforms, as stated earlier, should be to create a decentralized, diversified, elastic, and dynamic educational system.

4.60 An important reform which will help and strengthen this process is the system of college-school complexes recommended by the Education Commission (1964-66). The object of this reform is to link educational institutions between themselves instead of separating and atomizing them as is done at present. This view envisages a group of elementary schools working in close collaboration with a secondary school, a group of secondary schools working in close collaboration with a college, and a group of colleges working in close collaboration with a university. The programmes of collaboration will cover, among others, sharing of facilities, identification and development of talent, joint teaching and allied activities and better provision for inservice education of teachers. The programme will enable the teachers to use their academic freedom and autonomy collectively and in a more effective manner for the improvement of education.

4.61 As a further step in the same direction, the isolation of the school from the community must come to an end. For this purpose, we should develop programmes of mutual service and support between the school and the community. Similarly, the isolation of the education system from other social sub-systems (such as those of health, agriculture or industry) should also be done away with through appropriate linkages in general and vocational education.

4.62 Finance. The development of the educational programmes

indicated in this study will certainly need a large investment of funds; and we have assumed that the total educational expenditure may be doubled over a period of ten years. This will be a big and difficult effort. But that is probably the minimum required.

4.63 Three important issues need to be highlighted in this respect. To begin with, it should be emphasized that, while educational development needs money, it cannot be achieved through money alone. The non-monetary inputs, such as good planning, creating a climate of hard work; or improving the commitment of teachers and motivation of students, are far more important. In fact, in most areas of education, we have now reached a point of large diminishing returns for further investment of funds; and it is only non-monetary inputs (such as better planning and greater human effort) that can transform the situation. Secondly, the highest emphasis has to be laid on the more effective use of the existing investment in education, partly because additional funds will be difficult to come by, and mainly because there is so much waste and ineffectiveness in the existing system. Thirdly, we must make every effort to see that the unit costs go down without impairing quality (e.g., through modification of wage-structure, rational planning of institutions, adoption of larger pupil-teacher ratios where desirable, non-formal education, etc.). Otherwise we may never have the resources to provide good education to all our people.

5. Implementation

5.01 In the course of the earlier sections, we have put forward several major proposals. It is obvious that none of them is totally new and all that we can claim is to have made a selection of well-known recommendations built round the theme of the education of the common people and put them together in a coherent way, with some shifts in emphasis and a few modifications. The question to be answered, therefore, is this: Why is it that these recommendations were not implemented in the past and what strategy can we adopt to ensure a better implementation in the future? We should also admit that even these diagnostic and prescriptive questions are not new: they have been often asked in the past and also answered with equal frequency. We can, however, claim some novelty in the diagnosis we have offered and consequently in the remedial action we have proposed. In other words, our principal contribution is that we are suggesting a different and a new strategy of implementation.

5.02 Some Wrong or Inadequate Answers. Strategies of implementation obviously depend upon our diagnosis of the failure to implement educational reforms in the past. It is, therefore, necessary to draw attention to some wrong diagnoses and wrong or inadequate answers that have been commonly given so far.

(1) It has been said that we are a nation of 'good planners and bad implementers'. It is true that we do specialize in talking about our good intentions and noble objectives. But our plans are certainly not flawless or even always good; and to say that we are bad implementers does not explain anything. We must still ask the further question: why and in what way are we bad implementers? Those who put forward the bad implementation theory generally assume that the bureaucracy is mainly, if not solely, responsible for implementation and blame it almost exclusively for the failure. This is neither fair nor correct. While no one denies that the bureaucracy has to bear considerable responsibility for our failure to implement educational plans, it is not the sole culprit. The responsibility to implement

educational plans rests on the society as a whole and not on any one of its sub-systems.

(2) This game of trying to find a scapegoat for our failure to implement radical plans of educational reform does not end with the bureaucracy. Every agency concerned with educational development indulges in the game. For instance, the public at large very often blames the teachers who are supposed to have lost their commitment to learning and to the welfare of their students. Teachers do not take it lying down and blame the intelligent public for their indifference and the ignorant public for not appreciating the value(?) of the goods they sell, the politicians for all their unwarranted interference, the students for their indiscipline and lack of motivation, and the society itself for not giving them a better status and still better emoluments. The students, in turn, blame the teachers who are said to be often incompetent, dishonest, and liable to show caste prejudices, nepotism and favouritism, and the bureaucrats for their selfishness and corruption. The politicians themselves blame all others – the teachers, the students, the public, and the civil service. The Centre blames these States who blame the Centre; and so on. So the merry game goes round and round, each group or authority blaming every one except itself. In this drama full of dust and din, the only silent actor is the common man (the talisman suggested by Mahatma Gandhi) who bears the huge burden of educational costs without getting any education whatsoever. The fact of the matter is that each one of these agencies – the Central Government, States, public, teachers, students, administrators – has failed education and stands indicted unequivocally for not playing its due role. Every agency must, therefore, accept its share of the blame and make amends. This alone will help us to solve the problem for which the search for scapegoats will not provide the answer.

(3) Equally unsatisfactory are the pedagogic or technological solutions which, in our opinion, are only partial and at best, inadequate, answers. These include: better teachers (i.e., better general education, better professional training, better selection, and better emoluments); better curricular reform; better supervision; better administration; a greater use of the modern mass media; and for all these, more money. These are important issues and they have their own place in a total programme of educational reconstruction. But education cannot be equated with mere pedagogy. Its basic problems are rooted, not so much in pedagogy as in the interface between

education and society, and not infrequently, in the society itself. There are no mere pedagogic solutions to these complex problems.

(4) Yet another argument often put forward is that education does not receive adequate priority, that it is generally ranked below agriculture, power, industry, irrigation and family planning in most of our plan documents and that it is still regarded as ‘social service’ and not as ‘investment’. These charges are only partially correct. Although plan outlays on education have been comparatively small and decreasing proportionately over the years, the total expenditure on education (Plan and non-Plan) is very high and, as pointed out earlier, second only to that on defence. It has also been increasing at about twice the rate of growth in GNP. In fact, it is possible to argue that we have given education a high priority as indicated by the very high level of total educational expenditures already reached, that the possibilities of further growth in educational expenditures is limited and that such increases will have to face a serious competition from other developmental sectors and will have to be seriously weighed against alternative uses. Similarly, while we agree that educational expenditures should be looked upon as investment in man, we cannot really support larger expenditures on a mere linear expansion of the formal system of education which is so wasteful and inefficient and so skewed in favour of the haves. It is only a radical transformation of the system that can convert these expenditures into investment in the people of the country. Consequently, additional investments in education are justified only after such transformation has taken place or only to bring about such transformation.

(5) Finally, the most common reason advanced for our failures is the lack of adequate resources. This of course is an argument that can be advanced for the failure of almost every development plan in a poor country; and we often indulge in the game of preparing costly plans of educational development and justifying or rationalizing our failure or inaction on the ground that the needed funds are not available. In all such arguments based on the power of money, the usual assumption is that there are no problems which ‘mere money’ cannot solve. This is a fallacy. Some programmes in education (e.g., character-building) do not need money and we often fail because we use money to get what money can never buy. We also forget that the more relevant question in the present situation is, *not* what we can do if more resources are made available, but what we can do even within the existing resources. We also have little moral right to ask for more money when we waste

such large resources inspite of our poverty. We should also remember that, in poor nations, money will always be in short supply and that these nations will have to spend 'thought' and put in greater human effort to make up for inadequacies of monetary investment rather than the other way round. But we conveniently ignore this principle because it is always easier to spend money than thought (or to put in greater effort), especially if it is somebody else's money.

5.03 The Basic Issues. What then is the alternative diagnosis of our failure to bring about a radical transformation in education? We have indicated our views on the basic causes of our failure, in their appropriate contexts, in the preceding discussion. But even at the risk of some repetition, it is essential to sum them up briefly. These include,

the failure to transform the existing structure of formal education so as to make it elastic, dynamic, and supportive of the maximum possible freedom to schools, teachers and students to experiment and innovate;

the failure to develop large-scale and effective programmes of non-formal education at all stages;

neglect of micro-level living cells of education (i.e., the millions of learning groups where action and the reaction continually takes place between the teachers and learners or between the learners themselves), many of which have become diseased or even dead; failure to orient the educational system to the needs and interests of the common man and neglect of elementary and adult education; over-emphasis on secondary and higher education and on the educational needs and demands of the upper and middle classes; failure to take the hard decisions, both political and academic, without which a radical reform of secondary and higher education is not possible;

failure to generate a strong and nation-wide movement for educational reform and to sustain it over the years, both within and without the educational system; and

failure to develop the social and political forces that can help the people to come into their own; and

failure to launch a programme of simultaneous and complementary social and educational transformation.

It is obvious that these are the basic issues involved; and unless adequate attention is given to them, it will not be possible to bring

about the radical educational changes we need.

5.04 A New Approach. The new strategy of development based on an awareness of these fundamental causes of our failures in the past has several important aspects.

(1) *Adequate and Large-Scale Action.* To begin with, it is necessary to abandon our traditional approach to educational reform which is bureaucratic, selective and limited and to adopt a new approach based on the involvement of the people and a massive effort to meet the challenges facing us. In particular, we should not waste our time any longer in toying with essential and overdue reforms in the form of experimental or pilot projects. Instead, we should immediately launch carefully planned programmes on a scale proportional to the size and complexity of the problems that we desire to solve. For shaking up the system as a whole, we may have to mount a big national campaign or even adopt some drastic and unorthodox measures.

(2) *Organization of a Popular Movement.* Another important aspect of the strategy is, not to depend upon the State alone, but to organize a nation-wide intensive and popular movement to bring about the needed educational and social transformation. In the post-independence period, we have depended, almost exclusively, upon the State to bring about this transformation and the results have been far from happy. The experience of the past thirty years has shown that the State in India still represents, by and large, the haves and the upper and middle classes and that the representatives of the weaker sections play only a minor role therein. This has naturally led to several distortions such as,

emphasis on high-level trained manpower and bureaucracy rather than on the people themselves as the principal agents of change; catering to the needs and demands of the top 30 per cent of the people (which means giving more and better education to those who already have had some or a good deal) rather than to those of the bottom 30 per cent of the people (which means giving at least some education to those who have had none);

stress on secondary and higher education rather than on adult and elementary education;

resistance to all changes which would affect the privileged position of the upper and middle classes (e.g., the introduction of the common school) or reduction in the subsidies they now enjoy (such as increase in fees); and

opposition to all reforms that would have affected the middle class value system on which the present system of education is based.*

In a society like that of ours, the state has to intervene in favour of the poor and give them that essential support and protection which might enable them to overcome their basic handicap of poverty, at least partially. This is what Mahatma Gandhi meant by his talisman or the doctrine of *Antyodaya*. The state has failed to do so and has, on the whole, helped in passing on the benefits of the educational development to the upper and middle classes and to the rich and the well-to-do. It is, therefore, necessary to realize that we cannot leave the problem of radical educational reconstruction entirely to the sweet will of the state and that we must build up a nation-wide popular movement in favour of these changes in order to compel the state to bring about the needed educational transformation. This is what we did not do in the past and this is the one major programme we should now take up. In other words, if we desire education for our people, there is no escape from organizing the people to fight for it. This direct political mobilization is essential for development in its true sense and without it, no radical transformation is possible, either in education or in society. It was the existence of this political mobilization in the pre-independence period that created a climate in which both the educational and social systems functioned better; and it is the absence of a similar political mobilization in the post-independence period that has led to a deterioration, both in education and society.

(3) *A Simultaneous Struggle Within and Without the System.* Yet another major aspect of the new strategy of development is that we shall have to wage the war for the needed transformation, simultaneously within and without the educational system. There are some who argue that such a movement cannot be started *within* the educational system for a number of obvious reasons: the large size and inertia of the system; the class attitudes of the vast bulk of administrators, teachers and students who have concentrated their attention or marginal changes in their own immediate interests rather than in favour of the ultimate good of the people; the rigidity of the

*Basic education, for instance, was thrown out. When the Education Commission tried to introduce the concept of work-experience, Shri G. Ramachandra warned that those who threw out basic education were still in power and that they would throw out work-experience also; and they did.

system which does not permit innovation; the small number of committed individuals within the system to launch an effective struggle; and so on. We do not agree with this viewpoint which writes off the entire formal system of education and provides it with an alibi for total inaction. We hold the view that there are several good and committed individuals and many good elements within the system that must be roused and organized to build up an intensive movement within the educational system. But this task cannot be carried out or succeed unless we simultaneously organize a similar movement outside the system as well. During the past thirty years, we have concentrated, almost exclusively, on the reform of the system from within. This attempt has failed for obvious reasons. We cannot, therefore, leave educational reform to educational institutions, teachers and students alone, although they too have their own legitimate responsibilities and roles. Mahatma Gandhi had emphasized the need to work *outside* the educational system even with the ultimate objective of reforming the system itself. We must, therefore, organize a massive educational campaign *outside* the educational system with the help of competent and dedicated persons who do not belong to the system. The programmes of non-formal education provide a good basis for these efforts; and as shown earlier, excellent opportunities for the purpose are available at all stages, and especially in adult and elementary education. To the extent these outside efforts grow and succeed, the conditions within the system will also begin to change and it is this simultaneous action both within and without the educational system that will help us to bring about the essential educational transformation and provide good education to all the people.

(4) *Primacy of Work at the Grass-roots Level.* In the new strategy of development, there should be great emphasis at the micro-level, on the creation of living educational cells in the local communities. Work at this level, and particularly in rural areas, is extremely important. Every encouragement should be given to young and dedicated persons who are committed to this and propose to take up the programme as their life-mission. It is only when this work develops adequately that new ideas may be generated therein and rise to the top to give new directions to policy. Let us not forget that the educational revolution we need cannot begin in Delhi and spread to the villages. The probability that it may begin in villages and ultimately reach Delhi is far greater.

(5) *Simultaneous Struggle for Social Transformation.* The need to mount up a simultaneous programme of a complementary social transformation in support of this struggle for educational transformation has already been stressed. This is the most important aspect of the new strategy and the one basic condition for its success.

5.05 The Change Agents. If this new strategy is to grow and succeed, we cannot ignore the close relationship between education, social reform, and politics. We will have to mount up a major effort in three directions,

the workers within the system will have to be made aware of the basic political issues involved in social and educational transformation and assisted, through proper organization, to bring about the needed educational transformation;

the social and constructive workers should be made aware of the political implications of their work and trained to use their programme for the ultimate objective of conscientizing the people, giving them self-confidence, and helping them to assert themselves; and

the political workers who do not realize the significance of the cultural and educational dimensions of political mobilization should be made aware of them and should be helped to give due weight to them in all political programmes.

It is only such a three-fold, simultaneous, and coordinated effort that will help us to build a movement of adequate size, force, and dynamism to put across the significant programme for educational and social transformation visualized here.

5.06 Conditions Essential for Success. Before we conclude, we would like to emphasize that there is already a great awakening among the masses, an awakening which cannot be stifled and which it is in our national interest to promote. The educational transformation proposed here can be of great assistance in promoting this mass mobilization; and this mass mobilization itself can be a powerful instrument for their education and liberation.

5.07 The new strategy of development proposed in this study is based on the assumptions,

that we accept the supremacy of the people;

that we believe in a democratic, secular, and socialist society in

which poverty and exploitation are eliminated by a modification of the social structure, an egalitarian wage-policy, curbs on the consumption of the well-to-do, guarantee of a minimum standard of living for all, and the widest possible opportunity to the citizens, irrespective of religion or social status, to participate in decision-making, in production, and in pursuit of knowledge and culture; and

that we look upon education, along with direct political and moral action, as important instruments which can be used to support each other in bringing about this social transformation at an early date.

The success of these proposals will ultimately depend upon the number and quality of committed individuals who will share these views and are prepared to fight for them at all costs.

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